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ABSTRACT

Community development-oriented service learning (CDOSL) is an approach to service learning that integrates service with the school curriculum and the local community development agenda. This study examined the positive impacts that CDOSL has on rural students and communities. Surveys and case study research were conducted with 145 students, teachers, program coordinators, school administrators, and community leaders in 11 rural Midwest communities. Results indicate that CDOSL was a rare but innovative approach to service learning. Student social capital development was significantly greater for CDOSL projects than for non-CDOSL projects; students developed significantly more favorable relations with adult civic leaders and community organizations when their service-learning experiences pertained to high priority community issues. Student human capital development was not significantly greater for CDOSL projects than for non-CDOSL projects in terms of levels of civic knowledge, skills, and values. Positive community impacts of service learning were rated significantly higher for CDOSL projects than for non-CDOSL projects. Positive impacts included improved perceptions of youth and adults toward each other, closer relationships between schools and government, lower project costs, increased community demand for student involvement, and more timely accomplishment of community development goals. Recommendations are offered to schools and communities and to state and national programs. Appendices present data tables; survey questionnaires; community profiles; and an annotated list of 29 related resources, most with Web site addresses. (Contains 73 references.) (TD)

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K-12 SERVICE-LEARNING: A STRATEGY FOR RURAL COMMUNITY RENEWAL AND REVITALIZATION

Steven A. Henness
National Service Fellow

July 2001

Corporation for National Service
National Service Fellowship Program

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About the Author

Steven Henness is a National Service Fellow with the Corporation for National Service in 2000-01. Steve's professional interests include sociology of community, community development, non-profit and faith-based organizations, volunteerism and service-learning. His previous experience includes developing and coordinating the campus-based service-learning center at the University of Montana-Western, and serving as AmeriCorps Program Manager for the Montana Governor's Office of Community Service. Steve also served as an AmeriCorps*VISTA with Habitat for Humanity of Lexington, Kentucky in 1997-98. He holds a Professional Master's Degree in Rural Sociology from the University of Missouri-Columbia, and a Bachelor's Degree in Liberal Studies from the University of Montana-Western.

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ABSTRACT

K-12 Service-Learning: A Strategy for Rural Community Renewal and Revitalization

Goals of the study

In response to the Corporation for National Service's interest in how service strengthens communities, Steven Henness studied cases where K-12 service-learning has been used by rural schools as a strategy for community renewal and revitalization. Social and economic forces of the 21st century are confronting rural communities with a whole new set of issues and challenges. As a result, communities are in search of new strategies that will ensure a prosperous future and prevent further marginalization. *Community development-oriented service-learning (CDOSL)* is the focus of this project, an approach to service-learning that integrates service with the school curriculum and the local community development agenda. Community development-oriented service-learning is examined for its effectiveness as a strategy by which schools and communities can accomplish their goals together.

The basic objective of the research was to locate, measure, and document the positive impacts that community development-oriented service-learning has on rural students and communities. In particular, the human and social capital that students develop from service-learning experiences, and the direct contributions made by service-learning projects to community development were examined. These resources are shown to play a role in building student civic capacity and strengthening community problem-solving capacity. The project also sought to raise national awareness of the *rural context* of service-learning and to identify ways in which stakeholders can better support rural schools and communities who choose this strategy.

Survey and case study research was conducted with 145 informants (students, teachers, program coordinators, school administrators, and community leaders) in eleven rural communities of the Midwest. This report summarizes survey results, case study findings, implications for students, schools, and communities, and recommendations for key audiences at local, state, and Federal levels.

Results of the study

1. **Community development-oriented service-learning (CDOSL) is a rare but innovative approach to service-learning.** This approach is not well documented in the literature, and makes up only a small portion of service-learning in practice. However, while examples of schools utilizing service-learning to deliberately work toward goals for community revitalization are rare, those that do tend to be highly innovative, and are therefore worth investigating further.

2. **Student social capital development is significantly greater for CDOSL projects than for non-CDOSL projects.** Survey results found that rural

students develop significantly more favorable relations with adult civic leaders and community organizations when their service-learning experiences pertain to high priority community issues. Student asset development is reflected in the meaningfulness of the service to the community. Case studies also affirmed that students tend to develop more positive relations with adult civic leaders and community organizations from service-learning projects geared toward community development.

3. **Student human capital development is not significantly greater for CDOSL projects than for non-CDOSL projects.** Survey results showed that rural students do not necessarily develop greater levels of civic knowledge, skills, and values when service-learning projects address high priority community issues. This is most likely because classroom and community aspects of the experience do not always include a specific emphasis on civic learning and community development.

4. **Positive community impacts of service-learning are rated significantly higher for CDOSL projects than for non-CDOSL projects.** Service-learning projects that address high community priorities for local development tend to produce more favorable results for communities than low priority projects. Favorable results include improved perceptions of youth and adults toward each other, closer relationships between schools and government, lower project costs, increased community demand for student involvement, and more timely accomplishment of goals for community development.

Recommendations

Schools and communities

1. **Engage students in service-learning that addresses issues of greatest importance to communities.** Teachers and program coordinators can adopt a community development orientation to service-learning by tapping into community planning and decision-making processes, monitoring where potential projects exist, and engaging students in designing projects around priority issues.

2. **Bring issues of community survival and revitalization into the service-learning classroom.** Teachers can facilitate human and social capital development by incorporating learning objectives for civic knowledge, skills, and relationship building into plans for service-learning. Ensuring students connect with community leaders and discuss or write about the issues that they are addressing captures civic learning opportunities afforded by the experience.

3. **Support teacher and school administrator involvement in community revitalization work outside the school.** School boards and officials can support integration of the school curriculum with the local community development agenda by accommodating teacher and/or administrator participation on committees, boards, task forces, or other bodies that perform a community development function.

4. **Forge school-community partnerships that open doorways for students to participate in community and economic development.** Creating linkages between service-learning and community development is clearly not the sole responsibility of the school, but of the broader community. Local government, businesses, and civic organizations could begin by ensuring their decision-making structures and processes include school representation and are open to extended student participation.

5. **Provide financial and/or in-kind support for service-learning that involves students in projects addressing local priorities.** Because community development-oriented service-learning focuses on impacting issues of greatest importance to communities, it is more likely to attract the attention of sponsors. Community-minded businesses, civic clubs, foundations, and private donors seeking to invest in the future of civil society could provide financial or in-kind support for service-learning programs.

6. **Start a school-community dialogue about common goals and visions and develop mechanisms for ongoing connection between service-learning and community development.** Community change agents are in a unique position to facilitate community development-oriented service-learning. They can act as catalysts, bringing schools and communities together to identify strategies for joint action. They can also help schools create linkages by providing technical assistance and recommending program models, best practices, and alternative courses of action.

State and national programs

1. **Recognize and reward the innovators.** Learn and Serve programs can encourage rural schools and communities to adopt or continue with this approach by recognizing and rewarding those who have been making it work. Priority in funding decisions and processes could be given to applicants who demonstrate a commitment to creating linkages between service-learning and priorities for local development. National Service-Learning Leader Schools could add the integration of service with local priorities to its standards of excellence for selecting Leader Schools.

2. **Promote project linkages to priorities through community plans and visions.** Learn and Serve programs could further support ties between service-learning and community development by encouraging grant applicants to show how service will address plans and visions established by local communities.

3. **Facilitate learning exchanges between state programs, communities, schools, and community change agents.** Learn and Serve programs can support service-learning for rural revitalization by physically and electronically bringing together the people who are doing this work to share program models, project examples, and success stories. Grantee orientations, conference tracks, and

digital discussion forums could be used to increase learning and dialogue between service-learning schools and communities. The Learn and Serve Exchange could also be used as a tool for bringing community and youth development specialists into the circle. These professionals could work through the Exchange to provide schools with technical assistance in linking service-learning to revitalization efforts.

4. **Communicate this strategy option more broadly to schools and communities.** Federal and state agencies, policy groups, and national organizations working with communities on rural education and community development all have existing networks that could be utilized to spread the word throughout rural America that service-learning is a viable strategy option.

Conclusion

Community development-oriented service-learning is an effective strategy by which rural schools and communities are meeting their goals together. Survey and case study findings strongly suggest that this strategy, when properly implemented, can add new dimensions to the service-learning experience for students and communities. As evidenced in the examples of case study sites, this approach leads to successfully completed projects, increased civic pride, organizational development, and even restored relationships between rural communities. It builds the capacity of students to become active participants and leaders in the community, and strengthens the capacity of the community to work together toward an envisioned future.

Who should consult this study

The content of this report is relevant for researchers, policymakers, philanthropists, program directors, educators, school and community leaders, and community change agents who have an interest in service-learning, school improvement, and rural community and economic development.

The primary audience for the study is the Department of Service-Learning at the Corporation for National Service in Washington, D.C. Key audiences also include the Rural School and Community Trust, and other national organizations and Federal agencies working directly with rural constituencies. State educational agencies, Cooperative Extension, local government, school district representatives, and community- and faith-based organizations may also find the research results contained in this report pertinent to the groups they serve.

For more information

For more information about this project, contact Steven Henness, Dept. of Rural Sociology, 5 Sociology Bldg., University of Missouri, Columbia, MO, 65211. Phone: 573.882.7264. Email: sahfc6@mizzou.edu.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

K-12 Service-Learning: A Strategy for Rural Community Renewal and Revitalization

Research Problem

The core problem this research addresses is making an assessment of service-learning as a community development strategy, and the promise it may hold for rural communities in an age of transition. The view of service-learning commonly held by the field is as a teaching strategy (Billig, 2000a). This is to be expected, given that service-learning emerged as a pedagogical approach with roots in experiential education. However, this frame for service-learning does not allow for measurement of the broader impacts that service-learning has outside the classroom and the school. Addressing it as a community development strategy allows evaluators to take stock of the benefits service-learning brings to communities. Growing policy interest in community-level impacts of program interventions also warrant investigation at this scale (Grantmakers Forum, 2000).

Within the community development literature, much attention is given to the capacity-building potential of alternative strategies communities can choose for development. Civic capacity is a key ingredient determining the speed and ability with which communities are able to respond to changes in the external environment. By exposing students to community leaders and organizations through meaningful public work, *community development-oriented service-learning* is a strategy for building the civic capacity of students and communities for the future. It produces immediate benefits to communities through student project contributions, and develops human and social capital in students for use down the road. Essentially what occurs between schools and communities is the co-production of human and social capital for future community development (Hobbs, 1988).

With this in mind, the objective was to find out if community development-oriented service-learning projects produce significantly more benefits for students and communities than other approaches. For the survey research, the two primary research questions answered are:

1a. Do rural students develop greater levels of human capital from CDOSL projects than from other projects?

1b. Do rural students develop greater levels of social capital from CDOSL projects than from other projects?

2. Do rural communities rate positive impacts of CDOSL projects more highly than other projects?

Methodology

The research design called for a combination of survey and case study research. Quantitative and qualitative methods were chosen in order to collect a range of data on programs, participants, and impacts, and to strengthen the validity of the findings. Site visits consisting of personal interviews and surveys with informants were the principal method of data collection.

The target population consisted of rural schools in the study region receiving grant funds from Learn and Serve America and/or the Rural School and Community Trust in 1999-2000. Twelve schools and communities with an active track record of success in service-learning and community development were selected as sites (three in each state). Careful consideration was given to select a diverse group of school and community sites, reflecting common demographic, geographic, and cultural characteristics of the region.

Site visits to service-learning programs were conducted in eleven rural communities covering four Midwest states. In all, 145 informants (students, teachers, program coordinators, school administrators, and community leaders) were interviewed and surveyed. Program profiles were developed for each of the case study sites. Control and comparison groups were developed on the basis of whether service-learning projects addressed high or low community priorities. One-way analysis of variance and t-tests were used to measure the significance of differences. Findings include overall survey results, case study summaries, and supporting conclusions drawn between the two.

Findings and Discussion

1. **Community development-oriented service-learning (CDOSL) is a rare but innovative approach to service-learning.** This approach is not well documented in the literature, and makes up only a small portion of service-learning in practice. However, while examples of schools utilizing service-learning to deliberately work toward goals for community revitalization are rare, those that do tend to be highly innovative, and are therefore worth investigating further.

2. **Student social capital development is significantly greater for CDOSL projects than for non-CDOSL projects.** Survey results found that rural students develop significantly more favorable relations with adult civic leaders and community organizations when their service-learning experiences pertain to high priority community issues. Student asset development is reflected in the meaningfulness of the service to the community. Case studies also affirmed that students tend to develop more positive relations with adult civic leaders and community organizations from service-learning projects geared toward community development.

3. **Student human capital development is not significantly greater for CDOSL projects than for non-CDOSL projects.** Survey results showed that rural students do not necessarily develop greater levels of civic knowledge, skills, and

values when service-learning projects address high priority community issues. This is most likely because classroom and community aspects of the experience do not always include a specific emphasis on civic learning and community development.

4. **Positive community impacts of service-learning are rated significantly higher for CDOSL projects than for non-CDOSL projects.** Service-learning projects that address high community priorities for local development tend to produce more favorable results for communities than low priority projects. Favorable results include improved perceptions of youth and adults toward each other, closer relationships between schools and government, lower project costs, increased community demand for student involvement, and more timely accomplishment of goals for community development.

Implications and Recommendations

Schools and communities

1. **Engage students in service-learning that addresses issues of greatest importance to communities.** Teachers and program coordinators can adopt a community development orientation to service-learning by tapping into community planning and decision-making processes, monitoring where potential projects exist, and engaging students in designing projects around priority issues.

2. **Bring issues of community survival and revitalization into the service-learning classroom.** Teachers can facilitate human and social capital development by incorporating learning objectives for civic knowledge, skills, and relationship building into plans for service-learning. Ensuring students connect with community leaders and discuss or write about the issues that they are addressing captures civic learning opportunities afforded by the experience.

3. **Support teacher and school administrator involvement in community revitalization work outside the school.** School boards and officials can support integration of the school curriculum with the local community development agenda by accommodating teacher and/or administrator participation on committees, boards, task forces, or other bodies that perform a community development function.

4. **Forge school-community partnerships that open doorways for students to participate in community and economic development.** Creating linkages between service-learning and community development is clearly not the sole responsibility of the school, but of the broader community. Local government, businesses, and civic organizations could begin by ensuring their decision-making structures and processes include school representation and are open to extended student participation.

5. **Provide financial and/or in-kind support for service-learning that involves students in projects addressing local priorities.** Because

community development-oriented service-learning focuses on impacting issues of greatest importance to communities, it is more likely to attract the attention of sponsors. Community-minded businesses, civic clubs, foundations, and private donors seeking to invest in the future of civil society could provide financial or in-kind support for service-learning programs.

6. **Start a school-community dialogue about common goals and visions and develop mechanisms for ongoing connection between service-learning and community development.** Community change agents are in a unique position to facilitate community development-oriented service-learning. They can act as catalysts, bringing schools and communities together to identify strategies for joint action. They can also help schools create linkages by providing technical assistance and recommending program models, best practices, and alternative courses of action.

State and national programs

1. **Recognize and reward the innovators.** Learn and Serve programs can encourage rural schools and communities to adopt or continue with this approach by recognizing and rewarding those who have been making it work. Priority in funding decisions and processes could be given to applicants who demonstrate a commitment to creating linkages between service-learning and priorities for local development. National Service-Learning Leader Schools could add the integration of service with local priorities to its standards of excellence for selecting Leader Schools.

2. **Promote project linkages to priorities through community plans and visions.** Learn and Serve programs could further support ties between service-learning and community development by encouraging grant applicants to show how service will address plans and visions established by local communities.

3. **Facilitate learning exchanges between state programs, communities, schools, and community change agents.** Learn and Serve programs can support service-learning for rural revitalization by physically and electronically bringing together the people who are doing this work to share program models, project examples, and success stories. Grantee orientations, conference tracks, and digital discussion forums could be used to increase learning and dialogue between service-learning schools and communities. The Learn and Serve Exchange could also be used as a tool for bringing community and youth development specialists into the circle. These professionals could work through the Exchange to provide schools with technical assistance in linking service-learning to revitalization efforts.

4. **Communicate this strategy option more broadly to schools and communities.** Federal and state agencies, policy groups, and national organizations working with communities on rural education and community development all have existing networks that could be utilized to spread the word throughout rural America that service-learning is a viable strategy option.

Introduction

"There is something uniquely powerful about the combination of service and learning. There is something fundamentally more dynamic in the integration of the two than in either alone."

--Jane Kendall

Rural America: changes and challenges

At the dawn of the New Millennium, rural America is confronted with changes and challenges unlike any in the history of our country. For more than one-quarter of Americans living in rural areas, social, economic, political, and technological forces are bringing landmark changes to communities at lightning speed. Globalization of markets and culture, technological compression of time and space, devolution of public decision-making, and an increasingly diverse and mobile citizenry all are dramatic sources of change in rural society. Falling farm prices, dried up Main Streets, persistent poverty, outdated infrastructure, and an aging population, not to mention the continuing exodus of high school graduates to larger areas for employment, highlight some of the major issues facing rural communities today.

People living, working, and raising their families in rural areas are simultaneously challenged with new opportunities and new threats to their way of life. While some communities have been swift in adjusting to these changes, others have been more gradual at formulating responses. Some communities have jumped out ahead and are prospering from economic growth and expansion in new industries. Others have clearly fallen behind, experiencing steady declines in income and population that seriously threaten their future. High levels of variance in how rural communities are faring are disturbing at best, especially given that the social and economic health of rural areas are a barometer of the overall climate and well-being of society (Christie, 2001).

Growing gaps in community prosperity and quality-of-life suggest that rural America is at a crossroads. Communities are searching for sound development strategies that will bring them a less marginalized and more self-determined future. They need solutions that both preserve their way of life *and* ensure them a place on the map in an emerging global information society. Meeting these challenges of the future requires community members *of all ages* working together and creatively partnering with one another to address common goals and concerns. Youth participation in planning and community development goes a long way toward helping communities pool their assets and meet these challenges head on. It is within this context that national service, and service-learning in particular, provides a searchlight for rural communities who are navigating the New Century.

Service-learning: a closer look

The programs of the Corporation for National Service have delivered benefits of service to every part of America, even the most remote and sparsely populated areas. National service fits well with the values and traditions prevalent in rural society. Hard work, helping neighbors, respecting nature, and taking responsibility for one's community go hand-in-hand with the values national service programs seek to instill in participants.

With emphasis on reflection, values clarification, and civic education, service-learning in particular is effective at strengthening what already makes rural America strong. It recognizes young people as key resources in the community and empowers them through their education to make a positive difference right where they live.

Rural schools are in a unique position to facilitate the goals of national service, while at the same time making impacts on issues of greatest importance to communities. Not only do schools prepare students for becoming future citizens and community leaders, they also are often best positioned to assist rural communities with achieving their goals and visions. For this reason, rural K-12 service-learning is worth a closer look as a strategy for community development.

Purpose and significance of study

Service-learning is growing as an accepted teaching practice in classrooms and communities across America. Service-learning researchers and practitioners know that by combining community service with academic study, student learning and citizenship are enhanced. Studies shown various ways in which service-learning strengthens students, schools, and communities (Billig, 2000b).

But can communities purposefully convert student learning and citizenship into resources for community development? Are there additional benefits for communities who intentionally link service-learning with their plans and priorities for local development? This study addresses these questions by exploring K-12 service-learning as a community development strategy. The impacts of a community development-oriented approach to service-learning are assessed using the results of survey and case study research from eleven rural school-based programs in four Midwestern states.

This approach builds upon previous discussions of service-learning as a teaching practice and school reform strategy. At the community development strategy level, the study explores community dimensions of service-learning, which are catching the interest of more professionals in service-learning research and practice (Grantmaker Forum, 2000). Issues of effective practice and impact, which are of growing importance to educators, as well as policymakers, funders, and community developers, are also addressed.

The project provides these groups with an assessment of the effectiveness of service-learning as a community development strategy. It distinguishes the rural context of service-learning and spotlights the innovative work schools and communities are doing.

Finally, it raises national awareness of critical issues facing rural schools and communities, making an appeal for more program and policy work in these areas.

On the surface, service-learning appears to be a strategy that people concerned with community change and development should take seriously. It fits well within popular youth and community development frameworks emphasizing individual and collective assets (Kretzmann, 1991; Rennekamp et al, 1999). It is also consistent with other calls being made to link school-based programs, such as School-to-Work, with the goals of rural development (Harmon, 2000). Moreover, rural community development appears to be an approach for the service-learning field to consider closely. It provides the concepts and frameworks needed for addressing the broader implications of service-learning on communities. It also offers a set of goals and methods by which the objectives of service-learning are amplified.

In summary, an initial investigation of the effectiveness of service-learning as a strategy for community development is both timely and relevant. From this first step can be determined the promise and potential it may hold for rural communities everywhere.

Anticipated findings

Rural school-based programs making linkages between service-learning and community development projects seem to produce certain benefits for students and communities that are not attainable through other approaches. It is expected that the benefits associated with these linkages can be consistently identified, reported, and observed in differing contexts, and that the results will be informative for various audiences concerned about the condition of rural society.

When schools provide opportunities for students to connect with the ongoing process of community development through service-learning, it is anticipated that students will build knowledge, skills, and relationships that become resources for future development. These resources will increase student capacity for civic leadership and participation in community work, and will collectively increase the capacity of communities to accomplish their plans and goals for community development.

Research Problem

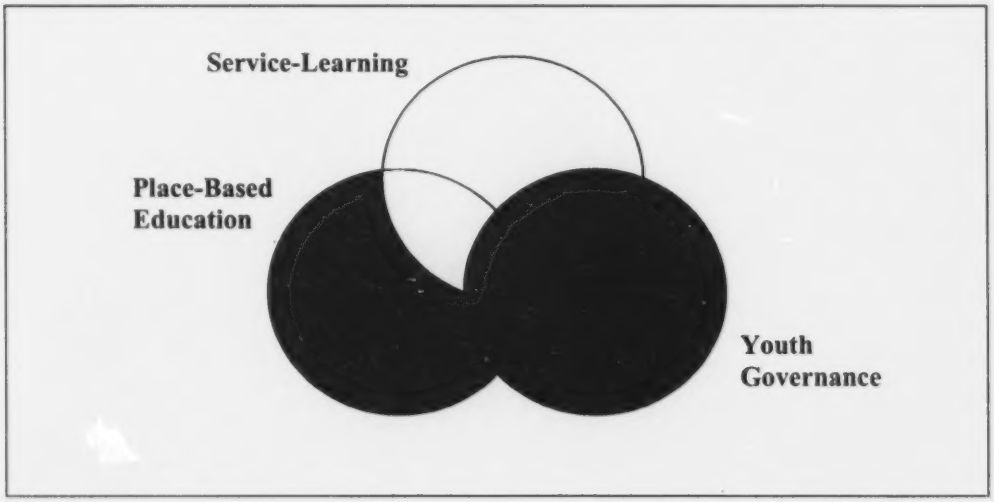
"Schools and communities in some rural areas have begun collaborating to provide experiences for students that serve both educational and community development goals...The long-term benefits of these school-community partnerships may include leadership development, renewed civic responsibility, and a revitalized sense of community."

—Bruce A. Miller

Focal point

Community development-oriented service-learning (CDOSL) is the focal point of this project. CDOSL occurs at the point where three contemporary "movements" within education and youth development converge. The area of overlap between service-learning, place-based education, and youth governance provides a fitting conceptual space for defining this approach (see Diagram 1 below). Community development-oriented service-learning includes elements of place-based education and youth governance, and is engineered to achieve the goals and visions set by communities for the future. The relationships between these movements and how they contribute to community development are discussed more in the literature review section of this report (see Page 6).

Diagram 1. "Movements" Within Education and Youth Development.



Target population

K-12 service-learning programs in rural schools of a four-state region of the Midwest were targeted for study. Schools in these states receiving grant funding from Learn and Serve America and/or the Rural School and Community Trust during fiscal year 2000 made up the target population. A case study approach was used to document the accomplishments of schools and communities with a track record of success in service-learning and community development. A survey was also developed to quantify the benefits associated with those accomplishments.

The heartland region of the United States was targeted because it is a relatively well-defined and homogenous geographical area in which many of the same social, economic, and demographic changes are occurring. The region is well-known as the breadbasket of America, accounting for the lion's share of U.S. agricultural production. The Farm Crisis of the 1980s, with record numbers of farm closures, employment losses, and out-migration, took a heavy toll on many Midwest communities. Today, with the continuing marginalization of agriculture, the onslaught of new information-based industries, and the arrival of diverse minority populations, many remain in major transition or even crisis (Huang, 1999). For these reasons, the Midwest was a fitting geographical target in which to explore the effects of rural service-learning on community revitalization.

Research problem

The research problem involved empirically testing the effectiveness of community development-oriented service-learning. Most of the literature to this point has addressed service-learning from the standpoint of its effectiveness as a teaching strategy (Billig, 2000a). Research on student impacts of service-learning has been a major focus of the field. Among other outcomes, studies have shown how service has positively impacted student social development, academic achievement, and civic responsibility. Some authors give service-learning even broader treatment, locating it within the context of strategies for comprehensive school reform (Bhaerman et al, 1998).

Recent interest in the community dimensions and impacts of service-learning has also emerged, partly due to the field becoming more visible to wider audiences, and partly due to political factors demanding greater levels of accountability from public programs (Grantmaker Forum, 2000). To adequately test the effectiveness of service-learning as a community development strategy, then, it seemed appropriate to consider impacts that occur at both the participant and community levels.

Although this topic moves service-learning into relatively new territory, the research problem raised by the study has not gone entirely unnoticed. At its root, a community development-oriented approach to service-learning stems from literature on the role of rural schools in community development (Nachtigal and Hobbs, 1988; Miller, 1995).

Rural schools are often the largest resource base in communities, and school personnel, programs, equipment, and facilities can all be resources for community development.

The rural school exercises much local political influence and is a major maintainer of community pride and identity (Salant and Waller, 1998). For these reasons, it also possesses much potential for building the capacity of the community to critically engage and shape its own future.

Closely related to this discussion is what the literature has identified as roles schools can play to build and enhance the use of individual and collective assets for community development (Carter, 1999; Nachtigal and Hobbs, 1988; Miller, 1995; Kretzmann, 1991). The research problem, then, involves measuring student and community impacts of service-learning in terms of increasing resources and civic capacity at those levels.

Literature Review

"Integrating schooling with the day-to-day life of the community, providing students with an opportunity to be a part of society now rather than at some time in the distant future, and involving students in the struggle to solve complex issues that are important to their community would not only provide more powerful learning, but it would go far toward reducing the growing alienation among our young people."

—Paul Theobald and Paul Nachtigal

National service and service-learning

A national movement

A rapidly growing body of research literature describes service-learning as a national movement tied to reform within K-12 education. Even while public support for service has waxed and waned in the last thirty years, service-learning has steadily gained momentum (Alt and Medrich, 1994; Conrad and Hedin, 1991). Within that time, service-learning in K-16 public education has matured into a field, supported by an infrastructure of national policies and programs, research, evaluation, training, and technical assistance. The National and Community Service Act of 1990, and later the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, were key legislative measures advancing the movement. The latter established the Corporation for National Service as the federal agency with the charge of creating service opportunities for Americans of all ages (Corporation for National Service, 2001).

Learn and Serve America, the program targeted by this study, was launched in 1993 as the Corporation's national initiative for service-learning in K-16 education. Since its inception, Learn and Serve America has sustained a budget of around $40 million per year (Kielsmeier, 2000). In 1999 alone, state-coordinated Learn and Serve programs in forty-eight states engaged 750,000 students in academically-integrated service through the sponsorship of school-based and community-based programs (Corporation for National Service, 2000). Roughly 65 percent of Learn and Serve programs during the same fiscal year were school-based, and 45 percent were based in rural settings (Corporation for National Service, 2000).

Within the service-learning field, organizations with specialties in service-learning research, training, and technical assistance have emerged, strengthening numerous facets of philosophy and practice. Nonprofits such as the National Youth Leadership Council have appeared on the national scene as advocates for service-learning. Within educational policy, groups like the Education Commission of the States have long promoted service-learning throughout all levels of education. Concerted effort has succeeded at generating national awareness and support for service-learning. Most policy

action, however, has remained at sub-national levels. Service-learning mandates have mostly been enacted at the school district level, and, in some cases, at the state level, such as Maryland and South Carolina (Tenenbaum, 2000). While a national infrastructure for service-learning has been gradually set in place, the debate about whether service-learning belongs as a permanent fixture within public education remains unresolved (Conrad and Hedin, 1991).

In recent years, the breadth of inquiry about service-learning has dramatically increased, mostly within policy areas of education and community development, and most of it reaching positive conclusions (Grantmaker Forum, 2000). The majority of studies conclude service-learning to be an effective teaching practice that produces benefits for students, schools, and communities (Alt and Medrich, 1994; Billig, 2000a; Billig, 2000b; RPP International, 1998).

However, not everyone accepts the growing body of supporting evidence (Conrad and Hedin, 1991; Billig, 2000b). Scans of past work identify various shortcomings, such as a lack of standard definitions, language, and common expectations (Grantmaker Forum, 2000). Critics have also identified the need for increased methodological rigor, including the use of quantitative methods, as a downside of service-learning research. Many studies on student outcomes of service, for instance, rely heavily on qualitative methods and anecdotal evidence to support their claims (Alt and Medrich, 1994). From these analyses, researchers point out gaps in the literature and opportunities to address still unanswered questions. Future research, it is advised, should take into account the limitations of past work if service-learning is to gain credibility with wider audiences.

Extent of implementation

Recent studies have measured how commonly service-learning has been implemented in elementary and secondary education. Skinner and Chapman (1999) report that approximately one-third of all K-12 schools have to some degree incorporated service-learning into the curriculum, and half of all public schools have a program. The National Service-Learning Clearinghouse estimates that 12 million K-12 students are now participating in service and service-learning activities of some kind. Between 1996 and 1999, Kleiner and Chapman (1999) found significant increases in the percentage of U.S. schools requiring and arranging community service activities, especially at the middle and high school level. In short, it is apparent that service-learning is growing in priority and popularity within public education in the United States.

Roots and origins

From the literature, it is also clear that the idea of linking community service with academic study is not new. Service-learning has formally existed within educational institutions for decades, and its precursors run even deeper. Proponents trace early roots back to philosophers such as Dewey, Piaget, and de Tocqueville, who wrote about the power of firsthand knowledge and experience in learning (Billig, 2000b; Conrad and Hedin, 1991). Dewey, the renowned "father" of experiential education, first showed how

students learn more effectively, efficiently, and with better retention, when directly engaged in what they are studying (LaPlante and Kinsley, 1994).

In modern times, the challenge to researchers and educators has become interpreting and reconciling the academic benefits of service-learning to educational standards. While some claim service-learning to be at odds with standards-based education, others illustrate how the two can be compatible (Loney, 2000; Tenenbaum, 2000).

Definitional challenges

A commonly debated question in the field is how to define service-learning. It has long been recognized that service-learning is a variant of experiential education. However, opinions differ widely on whether service-learning is more a philosophy, a pedagogy, a model, a program, or some combination of all of the above. Discussions on educational reform treat service-learning more as a philosophy, whereas those concerned with pedagogy are mainly concerned with its instructional value (Billig, 2000b).

The National Service Learning Cooperative provides a succinct definition of service-learning as "a teaching and learning method that connects meaningful community service experience with academic learning, personal growth, and civic responsibility" (Mintz and Liu, 1994). The Corporation for National Service offers a more detailed programmatic definition, but in narrower outcome terms (Billig, 2000b). According to its definition:

> "Service-learning is a method whereby students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that is: a) conducted in and meets the needs of communities; b) coordinated with an elementary school, secondary school, institution of higher education, or community service program and the community; c) helps foster civic responsibility; d) integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students, or the education components of the community service program in which the participants are enrolled; e) and provides structured time for students or participants to reflect on the service experience."
>
> (Corporation for National Service, 2001)

While consensus on definition remains a goal, most agree that several elements of service-learning are essential. These essential elements include direct student participation, carefully planned experiences, real curricular integration, clear learning objectives, actual community needs, and structured reflection time (Bhaerman et al, 1998; Skinner and Chapman, 1999).

Location within educational reform

Part of the debate over service-learning also centers around where to locate it within the context of educational reform and with regard to other forms of experiential education (Billig, 2000b; Riley and Wofford, 2000). One of the purported strengths of service-

learning is its agreement with the goals of other strategies proposed for educational reform. Bhaerman, et al (1998) identify the principles that service-learning and systemic educational reform share in common. Namely, both encourage active student learning, cohesive teaching and assessment, linkage to standards, and connections between school and community social systems. In fact, the championing of service-learning by educational reformers has led to the consideration of service-learning as an "educational commons," or meeting place, where various reform efforts converge (Kielsmeier, 2000). In other words, service-learning becomes the focal point around which other reforms are implemented (LaPlante and Kinsley, 1994).

Motivations and goals

The literature identifies multiple motivations, goals, and reform issues that are behind service-learning. One stream has to do with the problems facing the American public education and society. Some authors emphasize the need to improve student outcomes, while others focus more on school performance issues. Still others target strengthened relationships between schools and communities as the real issue at hand (Billig, 2000c; Crowson and Boyd, 1999). Researchers highlight how schools have become more isolated from their communities, with the classroom work students do increasingly disconnected from the local context. Likewise, they point to a growing alienation of youth from adults and society (Billig, 2000a; Conrad and Hedin, 1991). The declining interest of youth in socio-political participation, such as voting, is one indicator of alienation that appears repeatedly (Gomez, 2000). In a nutshell, service-learning is discussed as a strategy for aiding schools in addressing the larger issues facing youth, schools, and society today.

In summarizing the goals specified for service-learning, it is important to distinguish between goals at the individual and institutional level. At the individual level, researchers have differentiated between various categories of benefits. Although individual goals have been investigated for their effects on students, teachers, and the recipients of service, most of the research is concerned with the benefits of service to students. Perhaps the most comprehensive treatment of student outcomes is Alt and Medrich (1994), who identify at least seven major goals intended for student participants. The goals include: intellectual development; ethical development; social and psychological development; citizenship, civic and social responsibility; tolerance and acceptance of diversity; specific skill acquisition; and career goals and knowledge.

At the institutional level, Billig (2000a) summarizes benefits of service-learning intended for schools, partnering organizations, and communities. From this perspective, service-learning is understood more as a solution for filling institutional gaps, overcoming barriers, and addressing the ills of society. The motivations behind service-learning fit into a larger groundswell of dialogue aimed at bringing democratic renewal to institutions in American society. Concerns over schools becoming further isolated from their communities are voiced within this context (Hobson and Spangler, 1999). Authors point to youth as a segment of the population that has been under-valued for their leadership capacity and ability to make positive contributions to communities (Des Marais et al,

2000). The goal for service-learning at this level is a reconceptualization of the role of youth in communities, and schools in society, with reconnection being the ultimate aim (Kielsmeier, 2000).

In this vein, three primary objectives are identified for service-learning: 1) creating meaningful ways for youth to contribute; 2) instilling civic responsibility in students; and 3) strengthening communities through partnerships between generations (Perkins and Miller, 1994). Related goals lie in the potential of service-learning to strengthen relationships between youth and adults and between schools and communities (Riley and Wofford, 2000; RPP International, 1998). By engaging youth in service, communities foster connectedness, which leads to desirable outcomes such as economic development, better schools, and less crime (Putnam, 1995).

Ultimately, schools have their own goals for implementing service-learning. When asked about their reasons for adoption, Skinner and Chapman (1999) found that suprisingly most do not name academic achievement or career preparation, but cite reasons associated with strengthening relationships between students, schools, and communities.

Assessment of impacts

Perhaps the area of service-learning research of greatest interest to practitioners and policy-makers is the assessment of benefits and impacts. What effect is service-learning actually having on students, schools, and communities? Is it reaching its intended goals?

Several dimensions of impacts of service-learning are significant to point out. The nature of benefits realized, the recipient of those benefits, the level at which they occur, and the extent to which they occur are all important considerations. Much of the research on service-learning since 1990 has focused on individual outcomes of service to the student. Other common levels of analysis have included schools and organizations, and less frequently, communities.

Researchers have adopted various schemes for categorizing and measuring impacts. Billig's (2000b) scan of research from 1991 to 1999 compiles findings on impacts into categories of personal and social development, academic learning and career aspirations, civic responsibility, as well as schools and communities. Another line of work separates benefits into educational and non-educational categories. Here the focus is on with what *social assets* service-learning produces for communities (Grantmaker Forum, 2000; Salant and Waller, 1998).

Reviews of existing research have also concluded that not enough is known about the impacts of service-learning to reach many conclusions or make generalizations (Grantmaker Forum, 2000; Billig, 2000b). At least two areas of research related to the impacts of service-learning are cited repeatedly as areas for further investigation. One is the impact of service on student attitudes toward civic responsibility (Billig, 2000a; Perkins and Miller, 1994; Rutter and Newmann, 1989). The other is impacts of service-learning on communities (Billig, 2000b; Grantmaker Forum, 2000). Both areas of impact

are related to topics of building community capacity and achieving the goals of community development (RPP International, 1998).

Impacts on student civic capacity

The first area of impact explored by this study is the effect that service-learning has on student civic capacity. Civic responsibility has received extensive treatment of late. Schools making connections between service and citizenship is becoming more of a priority for public policy. The *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* passed by Congress in 1994, for instance, mandated schools to foster responsible citizenship through student participation in community service (Alt and Medrich, 1994).

As could be expected, various conceptualizations of what civic responsibility is and how it is measured have emerged. Alt and Medrich (1994) address citizenship and social responsibility in terms of student social relationships and social development outcomes, such as favorable attitudes toward adults and organizations, subsequent civic participation, and political efficacy (Conrad and Hedin, 1991). The belief is that through participation in community service, students become more connected to their communities and develop the attitudes and habits leading to active citizenship in adulthood (Anderson and Witmer, 1998).

From their reputed work with college students and service-learning and citizenship, Eyler and Giles (1999) underscore this argument. Their definition of citizenship is made up of the five elements of knowledge, skills, values, efficacy, and commitment. When taken together, these five elements form the human capital that students must develop or possess in order to become active, productive citizens.

Des Marais et al (2000) focus on the potential of service-learning to generate civic benefits to students and communities in the form of youth leadership development. To this end, a call is made for students to be given greater ownership in decision-making and responsibility for whether their service efforts succeed or fail. Researchers have also discovered that high school students engaged in service-learning are more likely to participate in socio-political aspects of life, including voting and community organization membership (Gomez, 2000).

Popular sociological studies by Coleman (1988) and others address social capital in terms of the effects that social structure has on educational achievement and other desirable outcomes, such as citizenship. Flora and Flora (1993) discuss "entrepreneurial social infrastructure" in terms of interactional aspects that are associated with rural community cohesiveness and problem-solving. Schools, and more broadly, local government, are identified for their roles in building social capital (Warner, 1999; Wehlage, 1993). Lane and Dorfman (1997) demonstrate how school-community collaborations, such as those formed through service-learning, serve to strengthen local networks. While very little has been written about the social capital development of rural students, works such as these provide a backdrop for such a discussion.

Impacts on community civic capacity

The second area of impact explored by this study is on communities as a whole. Alt and Medrich (1994) point out that beyond student outcomes, the goals of the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 include strengthening communities, promoting active citizenship, and "working to improve infrastructure and other aspects of community life." The community level is one of the most important realms of impact for service-learning, yet, ironically, it has been one of the least explored (Grantmaker Forum, 2000). This is partly due to the difficulties researchers face in evaluating at this level, and partly due to the major emphasis research has placed on service-learning as an educational strategy (Kleiner and Chapman, 2000).

Impacts of service-learning on communities have been explored in terms of the perceptions of community members toward students and the school, and relationships between schools and communities. For instance, studies have documented how community members see youth more as valuable resources to the community (Billig, 2000b). Likewise, youth perceptions of adults have been enhanced through service-learning projects that expose them to the roles and responsibilities of adults in the community. Community organizations indicate they would work with students again if given the opportunity, and often initiate those opportunities themselves (Brandeis University, 1999). Positive experiences with service-learning may lead to an increase in community support for school programs in general.

Studies have also emphasized advantages of service-learning, such as stronger partnerships between schools, community organizations, and local government (Salant and Waller, 1998; Perkins and Miller, 1994). Projects increase the level of student participation in community development activities, and in some cases, even involve them in phases of public planning and decision-making (Israel and Ilvento, 1995). Various illustrations reveal how service-learning has helped rural communities accomplish their goals for community and economic development, sometimes in a more timely and cost-effective manner (Miller, 1995; Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000).

To summarize, research has shown that stronger relations result between youth and adults, and between schools and communities because of service-learning. In this way, the literature has begun to make a case for how the experience of working together on common goals strengthens the capacity of rural communities to formulate better, faster responses to change.

Service-learning in rural context

Insights and importance

One of the most useful contributions of service-learning research has been the identification and differentiation of various contexts in which service-learning occurs. Though relatively little has been written about them specifically, rural schools and communities are one context in which service-learning can be studied (Parsons, 1993; Lapping, 1999). Framing and understanding service-learning in the rural context is

important to the larger field for several reasons. First, a large proportion of schools that have implemented service-learning can be classified as rural. As mentioned earlier, an estimated 45 percent of Learn and Serve grantees are schools serving rural areas. Secondly, many of the challenges and issues facing smaller schools and communities threaten the future of public education for millions of Americans. Changes in rural education policy, for instance, stand to affect the education and life opportunities of nearly 7 million schoolchildren (American Association of School Administrators, 2000). Finally, research on rural settings can be particularly insightful, since the implementation of service-learning is easier to understand at this scale, impacts are often more feasible, and the changes are frequently more visible than in metropolitan settings (Hobbs, 1988).

Definitions of "rural"

Defining what is "rural" has traditionally been problematic. Social, demographic, geographic, occupational, and cultural dimensions (or some combination) have been asserted at one time or another (Flora et al, 1992; Gilbert, 1982). As a result, disagreements over what is rural and what is not have remained about as diverse as the countryside itself. Yet, various classification systems, such as that used by the Census Bureau, the Beale codes of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, and the Johnson codes of the U.S. Dept. of Education, have sought to remove some of the ambiguity and confusion (American Association of School Administrators, 2000).

The Beale codes classify communities in degrees of rurality along demographic and spatial continua. For example, places with population of less than 2,500 and non-adjacent to a metro area are classified as most rural, whereas places with population of up to 25,000 and/or adjacent to a metro area are considered least rural. Although imprecise by some standards, this scheme provides a systematic way of determining where service-learning is "rural" (American Association of School Administrators, 2000).

Characteristics of "rural"

By far, the most distinguishing feature of rural areas is the people who live there. Lapping (1999) discusses the popular mythologies of rural people that abound in mainstream society. For instance, he notes how contemporary thinking tends to polarize rural folks into the Jeffersonian ideal of proud, hard-working, and family-oriented agrarians, or as "rural radicals" touting anti-government slogans and agendas of hate. These views have sprung out of longstanding stereotypes created by the media and perpetuated by isolated events. In reality, Lapping (1999) asserts that rural people are average citizens with interests, values, and worldviews as diverse as anywhere else.

In fact, visitors to rural communities most frequently praise them for their charm, friendliness, and slower pace of living. According to Nachtigal and Hobbs (1988), the social structure of smaller towns is typically more horizontal than it is hierarchical. Connections to family members, neighbors, and nature are deeply valued and widely shared among rural-dwellers. The knowledge of rural residents is rich in terms of social relationships, community memory, and regional history. Many government programs

and outside interventions have failed for lack of taking into account local values and interests, and the tight web of existing relationships between rural people. Residents are more apt to view everyone living in the area as "pretty much the same." There are greater incentives for people to conform to the prevailing views and values of the majority, since smaller communities afford less anonymity than larger communities, and the costs of dissent are greater. When compared to urban and suburban dwellers, on a national average rural people are disadvantaged by less education, lower incomes, and limited access to goods and services. However, they consistently rate their quality-of-life higher than residents of more populated areas (Nachtigal and Hobbs, 1988).

The structure of labor in rural areas tends to be less specialized. Occupations such as farming maintain a low division of labor, rewarding those who have a wide and versatile range of skills. For this reason, the knowledge base of rural people is more generalized than specialized (Nachtigal and Hobbs, 1988). Tradition and personal experience are held in high regard. Resourcefulness and resilience also characterize rural people who have lived through generation after generation of "hard times." Scarce financial resources and shifting societal conditions have required rural residents to exercise flexibility and innovation in order to survive.

Individuals in rural areas hold leadership status more on a reputational basis than a positional one. Informal institutions and networks are key in determining the distribution of power in rural communities (Lapping, 1999). It is common for leaders to occupy multiple leadership positions at the same time. The local real estate broker may also be the Chamber of Commerce president, the economic development committee chair, the Lions Club treasurer, and the high school track coach, all at the same time.

Rural agencies and organizations have their distinctions as well. Local governments and community groups are more accessible to citizens since they have fewer levels of hierarchy and are located "just up the street." Rural citizens also are more likely to know their elected officials on a personal as well as a professional basis. The fact that rural agencies and organizations are smaller in a physical and financial sense, and are staffed by volunteers or part-time employees, can make partnerships and collaboration with schools more difficult to sustain (Gulati-Partee and Finger, 1998; Flora et al, 1992).

While the differences between rural and urban areas are real, authors have also pointed out the commonalities that exist between communities, regardless of size or geographic location (Heartland Center for Leadership Development, 2000). Communities everywhere have the same aspirations and face the same problems. Economic opportunity, quality education, good housing, adequate health care, and opportunities for recreation and personal and spiritual growth remain important to all.

Rural service-learning

The small amount of literature addressing rural service-learning illustrates that issues and opportunities, while similar in many respects to non-rural settings, also have some unique elements. For instance, barriers to implementing service-learning in rural areas may

include lack of teacher time, means and costs of transportation, inadequate student supervision, and lack of teacher experience (RPP International, 1998).

Another challenge that is amplified in rural areas is finding strong, suitable community partners for service-learning (Gulati-Partee and Finger, 1998). This is the case because rural agencies and organizations are generally fewer in number and shorter on capacity than those in larger, more densely populated areas. However, there can be a flip side to these limitations. Less hierarchy and fewer layers of government may work to the advantage of rural schools partnering with local agencies on service projects. Diverse histories, ethnic backgrounds, political structures, and employment bases all factor into making rural community contexts as different from place to place as they are between metro and non-metro areas (Flora et al, 1992).

Social and economic trends

The demographics of rural America reflect a wide range of social and economic trends at work in the country, including a general aging of the population and an increasingly mobile citizenry (Walter et al, 2000). Periods of economic hardship, such as the Farm Crisis of the 1980s have characterized the landscape of demographic change in rural areas. From 1980 to 1990, U.S. agricultural communities under 2,500 people lost 8 percent of their population. In Midwestern states the numbers were even higher. Rural counties in Nebraska, for instance, lost a staggering 13 percent of their residents during the same period (Walter et al, 2000). In the last decade, however, the national pattern has reversed, with rural areas experiencing increases due to in-migration (Huang, 1999). Yet, communities in some regions, especially those with a large concentration of agricultural income, continue to decline.

However, national figures do not always provide an accurate view of the complex realities occurring at the local community level. Dramatic changes may not occur in population size, but in composition. Variables such as age, race, and socio-economic status may vastly alter the make-up of communities. Herzog and Pittman (1995) note two contrasting patterns of migration presently at work in rural areas of the U.S. One is a rural-to-metropolitan movement of younger working-age people, contrasted by a metropolitan-to-rural movement of older retirement-age people. Recent updates of Census figures have also reported rural regions like the Midwest as one of the fastest growing in terms of minority population (Wells and Bryne, 1999). The startup or shutdown of a large employer can also substantially change the composition of a community. Hundreds of entry level jobs in a manufacturing plant may introduce a whole new socio-economic level to a community. Meanwhile, school enrollment may virtually double or half-size overnight, while student numbers in neighboring towns remain stable. From this brief discussion, it is evident that population changes in rural areas may be anything but smooth and continuous (Huang, 1999).

The structure of rural economies also has some distinguishing factors worth mentioning. First of all, they are often composed of a high concentration of one or two industries, such as agriculture or small manufacturing (Nachtigal and Hobbs, 1988). Economists

have recorded major changes that have occurred within rural economies, such as the shift from resource-based industries to service-based industries (Flora et al, 1992). Because of their traditional reliance on resource-intensive industries, rural communities have remained vulnerable in an increasingly global marketplace (Huang, 1999). As could be expected, these shifts have had consequences for rural education, families, and children.

Further segmentation of the labor market has separated skilled from unskilled labor, with high-skill jobs preferentially locating to higher population centers. The effect has been the growth of a rural-urban income divide, leaving many rural areas with minimal availability of livable wage jobs. In fact, a lack of demand for skilled labor in rural areas has locked a large concentration of families into low-paying, low-benefit jobs (Herzog and Pittman, 1995). Narrowing bases of employment mean local government tax collections have suffered, contributing to other problems such as smaller educational budgets, limited social services, and inadequate infrastructure (Nachtigal and Hobbs, 1988). Consequently, it should come as no surprise that poverty is a major issue facing rural America, and that one-third of the impoverished among rural Americans are children (Maynard and Howley, 1997).

The next section looks more specifically at the history and status of rural education and how these factors have encouraged reform strategies such as place-based education and service-learning.

Rural education

Rural education lacks a precise definition of a "rural school" (Beeson and Strange, 2000; Herzog and Pittman, 1995). The Johnson coding system, devised by the U.S. Dept. of Education using Census population categories, is a frequently referenced standard for research (American Association of School Administrators, 2000). Schools in communities that fall under the Johnson code of 7 (less than 2,500 people) are classified as rural. This classification is considered by the literature as a conservative approach (Beeson and Strange, 2000).

Rural education makes up a sizable portion of the public education pie in the United States. Beeson and Strange (2000) report that one-fourth of U.S. schoolchildren attend rural schools in places of less than 25,000 people. That is, about 6.6 million of the country's 46 million school-aged children are classified as rural (American Association of School Administrators, 2000). More conservatively, fourteen percent are enrolled in schools in towns of 2,500 or less (Beeson and Strange, 2000). Rural schools average about 305 students, while the average school size in the U.S. approximates 525 students. Rural school districts tend to be composed of three schools or less, while schools districts in other areas are much larger (American Association of School Administrators, 2000).

Another strand of rural education literature deals with the effectiveness of *small schools* compared to larger schools (Raywid, 1999). Whereas rural schools are almost exclusively small schools, small schools are found in a variety of community contexts. In

fact, a reintroduction of the small school concept is to be found in a growing number of urban school districts.

Opinions differ as to what constitutes a small school, and whether it is merely size, or other factors like culture and governance that are essential. For instance, authors have pointed to the close interdependence between schools and communities as one inherent advantage that rural schools have going for them (Hobbs and Nachtigal, 1988). Small schools also afford students learning about problems and opportunities at a scale they can understand. Because educational resources are tight, students must assume greater responsibility for their education and self-development (Carter, 1999).

In terms of enrollment size, the literature defines elementary schools with 350 students and high schools with 500 to 800 students as small (Raywid, 1999). Within these ranges, studies have confirmed that small schools are more productive and effective than big schools. Students learn more, progress more rapidly toward graduation, are more satisfied, drop out less frequently, and behave better than students in big schools. Moreover, disadvantaged students are more likely to succeed in small schools. Studies have also shown that from an economic angle small schools are less efficient on a cost-per-student-enrolled basis, but more efficient on the basis of student graduation rates (Raywid, 1999).

Roles of rural schools

A major theme in the literature on rural education is the sizable and multi-faceted role that schools play in rural communities. Schools often double as community or cultural centers (Salant and Waller, 1998; Miller, 1995). Rural school facilities such as the library, gym, and auditorium are used as community facilities and meeting space (American Association of School Administrators, 2000). School activities such as athletic sporting events and musical performances bring community members together on a regular basis. It is not hard to understand how schools are the focus of rural community life. They are a primary source of community pride and play a significant role in ongoing community maintenance (Maynard and Howley, 1997; Herzog and Pittman, 1995).

Rural schools also have a substantial role in community economic development. Frequently, schools find themselves as the sole provider of basic and continuing adult education in the community. They may host computer literacy classes or sponsor major tourist events such as history days or community festivals. Sometimes the last remaining public agency in town, rural schools may be a community's largest employer, the biggest purchaser of goods and services, and may manage the largest tax-based budget (Hobbs, 1995; Nachtigal and Hobbs, 1988).

Issues and barriers

Authors note, though, that many people, even those most familiar with the educational community hold the misconception that rural schools are in good shape (Herzog and

Pittman, 1995). In actuality, although rural schools have the same needs as other schools, they face a unique set of issues and problems (Beeson and Strange, 2000).

Rural teachers and school administrator salaries are lower than national averages. Consequently, recruitment and retention of teachers and administrators is one of the biggest issues facing rural education (Collins, 1999). A study on factors related to retention found that teachers leave for reasons of geographic isolation, distance from family and larger communities, harsh climates, and inadequate shopping. In response, some schools and states have begun to offer additional incentive packages to keep teachers in rural classrooms. Greater transportation time and costs, high per-pupil costs, and scarce access, training, and support for computer technology are also salient issues in rural education (Collins, 1999).

Computer technology is arguably the greatest innovation to impact rural education this century. Through connecting to the information highway, remote rural schools have been able to overcome barriers of distance and isolation. This has opened up new doorways of possibility for teaching and learning. Yet, while advanced technological applications race ahead, basic issues of computer access and affordability remain critical for many rural schools. Finding themselves on the wrong side of the "digital divide" is an ever-looming reality for rural schools and communities (Beeson and Strange, 2000).

Another set of issues revolves around the preparation of high school students for college, and the retention of high school students upon graduation. For a number of reasons, rural students are disadvantaged in terms of preparation for and access to college (Herzog and Pittman, 1995). Upon graduation, the effect of massive numbers of students relocating to larger areas has led to what some term a "brain drain" on communities. Walter et al (2000) remark the tendencies of rural schools to educate their best and brightest out of communities. The rural exodus of young people is fueled in part by perceptions that the community is boring and devoid of opportunities (Nachtigal and Hobbs, 1988). From a human capital investment perspective, graduates leaving rural areas take with them the community's investment in their education. However, economic development strategies for youth leadership development can address the need for communities to recoup their investments in human capital (Nachtigal and Hobbs, 1988).

Many of the issues and problems confronting rural education today have been attributed to the philosophies and assumptions underlying the public education system in the U.S. (Theobald and Nachtigal, 1995). Critics have attacked the industrial model of public education as failing to account for the social and cultural fabric of rural society (Sher, 1995). The following segment explores more of the background behind the educational system and why it has come under attack.

History of education system

Before the turn of the 20th century, it was taken for granted that American public education basically was rural education (Nachtigal, 1982; Theobald, 1997). Then came the Progressive Era, setting urbanization in motion and dramatically increasing the number of students classified as "urban." Ear'y attempts at the systematization by

industrialists like Horace Mann led to the creation of the public education system (Theobald, 1997).

In the years that followed, the public education system increasingly became patterned after an industrial paradigm. Behind this factory approach was the cultural assumption that "bigger is better" (Theobald and Nachtigal, 1995). As David Tyack termed it, the "one best system" to public schooling sought minimize differences between schools through standardized tests and teaching practices, a centralized system of accountability, and a curricular focus on mainstreaming students into the workforce (Hobbs, 1995).

Along with the "one best system" came attempts to reform traditional rural schools. Nachtigal (1982) outlines four historical themes that made up rural education reform. The first, in which rural schools became viewed as a problem to solve, accompanied the onslaught of the industrial model. The second, taking shape around the early 1950s, came to view rural schools as undesirable but tolerable. Increased public support and assistance, such as a county superintendent system and professional teacher training, were extended to rural schools with the aim of diminishing their "deficiencies."

It was not until later in the 1950s with the work of Frank Cyr that the third theme emerged. Cyr's research demonstrated the inherent strength and desirability of rural schools in terms important to reformers, such as flexibility. Finally, in the late 1960s under the auspices of the Great Society, rural-urban school differences were downplayed in favor of a more generic approach to problem-solving.

While holding out economic efficiency as its goal, the "one best system" promised much in the way of student achievement and school performance. Yet the literature broadly acknowledges the industrial model as having failed to deliver on its promises (Sher, 1995). Test scores and cost-benefit analyses have not produced the kinds of results anticipated. As critics have pointed out, going the way of standardization has occurred at the expense of local communities (Nachtigal and Hobbs, 1988). Youth issues such as high school dropout rates, teen pregnancy, and teen suicide have worsened over the same time span (Conrad and Hedin, 1991).

Though the failure of the "one best system" approach is widely accepted, its influence remains pervasive in educational policies, standards, programmatic philosophies, and training programs (Sher, 1995). Harmful effects have been as pronounced in rural areas as anywhere else, where small schools have undergone reconstruction to make them look and function more like larger schools.

In rural areas, pressures for schools to remain competitive and economically efficient have resulted in structural rearrangements such as consolidation. As Sher (1995) points out, school consolidation and the merger of school districts has been the cornerstone of rural educational reform. Declining enrollment and shrinking tax bases have created incentives for this kind of restructuring (Seal and Harmon, 1995). Consolidations and mergers have accounted for a significant decrease in the number of rural schools and school districts.

Sociological case studies have shown that school consolidation has had negative social, economic, and political impacts on rural communities (Salant and Waller, 1998; Dreier and Goudy, 1994). Consolidation administers a heavy blow to community identity, contributing to population decline in a rural community over time. Despite consolidation, rural schools have remained smaller and poorer than schools in urban areas (Herzog and Pittman, 1995). In addition, these maneuvers have further centralized school administration, removing another degree of local control from communities (Salant and Waller, 1998).

Reform alternatives

One response to the shortcomings of the public educational system has been a proliferation of research aimed at generating public awareness and action on issues. As a result, the education policy community has been marked by a growing awareness of rural education issues. Recent efforts have targeted the state education policy arena especially, since that is where much authority and control over the system rests (Theobald and Nachtigal, 1995).

Beeson and Strange (2000) have constructed indices of the importance of rural education and the urgency with which state policy makers should address needs. They conclude that the importance and urgency of rural education policy is high for a majority of states. Interestingly, all four Midwest states in this project's study region ranked "very important" on the importance gauge, and three of the four ranked "serious" or "critical" in terms of urgency (Beeson and Strange, 2000).

At state and Federal levels, another response to the growing recognition of challenges faced by rural education has focused on rural school finance reform. In particular, policy-makers are softening the rules somewhat by which rural schools obtain and use Federal grant monies. The Rural Education Initiative, a pending proposal before the U.S. Congress, is one example of greater flexibility being introduced within rural school finance (American School Administrators Association, 2000).

Another line of response has taken a more fundamental approach to school reform, revisiting the foundations of public education in democratic society and formulating new ideas and models for rural schools. School governance, culture, and pedagogy have all been wrapped into the dialogue on school renewal, although much of the literature has addressed reform issues by taking aim at the curriculum. In particular, as a solution to school reform, writers have proposed refocusing learning on the local context (Theobald and Nachtigal, 1995). This follows from acknowledgements that school curricula do not pay proper attention to art, history, economics, and the ecology of communities and regions (Walter et al, 2000).

It is argued that engaging students in learning focused on building communities can accomplish the intended goals of systemic change. The effectiveness of schools can be improved through ensuring students are connected to families and communities (Hobbs,

1995). This approach to school reform calls for classroom work that increases direct student participation and learning in communities. Authors claim that re-embedding school curricula in the context of community will enhance the relevance and effectiveness of education while building social capital within the community (Wehlage, 1993; Higbee, 1990; Nachtigal and Hobbs, 1988).

It is within this framework that ideas of community-based or place-based education have resurfaced. The next portion looks at these ideas more closely as they appear in the literature.

Place-based learning

Community-based education is a model of education that takes the community as its primary object of study and as the principal context in which learning takes place. As its goal, community-based education seeks to make schools more responsive to the needs of their communities, and communities more responsive to the needs of their schools. It entails revising the school curriculum to draw student learning experiences from the life of the community. It examines community issues and problems as parallels to larger issues in the nation and the world. It involves students in doing things that affect their own future and that of their communities (Walter et al, 2000). Because the focus of student work is the community, if engages students in generating educational products for audiences beyond the teacher and the classroom (Wigginton, 1985).

A growing number of academic programs at all levels of education are adopting a "community-based" approach. For instance, a health-related professions program at one major University epitomizes the community-based approach as incorporating community needs assessment, community participation and evaluation into its goals. The term has been applied to education across age levels and generations, and to programs targeting people of varying skills and abilities.

Place-based education is a closely-related concept that elevates the importance of the local context. Advocates prefer the use of "place" over "community" because it is more encompassing of all that a local rural environment entails. The place-based movement follows in the Foxfire tradition that teachers can teach and learners can learn best when education is firmly rooted in the culture of community (Wigginton, 1985).

Place-based education is viewed as a viable alternative enabling rural schools to fulfill their dual mission of preparing students to stay and live in the community, or if they so choose, to leave and survive in the outside world (Walter et al, 2000). However, on a better-grounded education hang many hopes for improving youth retention. Advocates reason that the more students understand their community, the more they become invested in it. The more students are invested in it, the more likely they are to choose to stay in the community, or return at a later date (Theobald and Nachtigal, 1995). The overall goal is educating young people into communities instead of out of them (Walter et al, 2000).

Various authors have identified the larger implications of place-based education for schools and communities. Besides making learning more meaningful and effective, it changes both student and community perceptions about each other, an outcome as important as the education itself (Nachtigal and Hobbs, 1988). It also supplements community resources and contributes to the achievement of community goals (Hobbs, 1995). Student experiences can be purposefully devised to serve both educational and community development goals (Miller, 1995).

For these reasons, place-based education is portrayed as an answer to the increasing separation of schools from their communities. It would have schools restructure themselves such that the school is at the center of the community and the community is at the center of the school (Walter et al, 2000).

The Rural School and Community Trust is the leading national organization promoting place-based education today. Formerly the Annenburg Rural Challenge, the Trust originated in 1993, when Walter Annenberg, the famed journalist, philanthropist, and U.S. diplomat to Great Britain, bequeathed $500 million to the improvement of American public education (Sher, 1995). The Rural Challenge was formed when a committee of rural education scholars and advocates convinced Annenberg that $50 million should be earmarked for rural education. The goal of the Rural Challenge is to support or create genuinely good, genuinely rural schools. Its seeks to affirm rurality by helping schools construct a pedagogy of place. An important component involves laying a political and professional groundwork for that to occur. Although not a "quick fix or panacea," the Trust is widely recognized as delivering solid, fundamental, and promising reform within rural education (Sher, 1995).

Thus, like service-learning, place-based education occupies the status of a national movement in its own right. Both share common tenets and principles, and cut across the fields of public education and youth development. The next section takes a blending of these movements with youth governance and rural community development a step further by introducing a framework for community development-oriented service-learning.

Theoretical Model

"The learning process [should involve] doing things that affect the destiny of the students and communities as well as reflection on what one is doing. This kind of learning process makes education relevant to survival and the transformation of society."

—James Walter et al

The community development-oriented approach

Basically, a community development orientation to service-learning implies an innovative approach that from the community standpoint is both integrated and strategic. The term "integrated" is used to mean an approach involving: 1) real integration of service with the school curriculum; and 2) real integration of service and learning with the local agenda for community development.

For students and teachers following this approach, planning and preparation for service-learning entails not only establishing clear objectives for classroom learning and service but also making sure clear linkages exist to community goals. The process of planning projects around community goals and issues also implies a *strategic* use of service-learning. Goals and priorities steer the selection of projects toward what is deemed most important by the community, and away from other project possibilities.

This orientation is also distinct in that it concentrates the service and learning that students do on community issues that are *long-term* and affect *all citizens* living in an area. For example, in one rural school district in South Carolina, students analyzed community water quality, which contributed to a process leading to the construction of a new water tower and 450 families receiving water service (Tenenbaum, 2000). In another case, students in rural Texas worked with adults to form a rural development collaborative action team, and then met critical health needs by establishing and staffing a school-based health clinic that now has the capacity of 15 to 25 patients a day (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2001).

Examples of linkages

Linkages can be made between service-learning and the community development agenda in a number of ways. Schools have utilized results of community strategic visioning and planning processes, for instance, to inform them on what areas of the community service-learning projects should address. They have involved students in conducting community surveys, civic inventories, or needs assessments to directly determine what citizens consider the greatest needs or priorities for the community (Lisman, 1998; Israel and Ilvento, 1995).

Alternatively, some schools have developed projects in conjunction with a community improvement committee, community development corporation, or other organization whose role is to foster coordination and collaboration on community projects. In the Texas example, the school and community came together in a collaborative action team to identify needs and discuss options, then designed and implemented the rural health clinic as an integrated project (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2001).

A community development-oriented model

A model of community development-oriented service-learning was developed from related literature and specific examples of programs and projects that seemed to embody this approach. The purpose of the model was to pull together critical elements and assumptions into one cohesive framework in order to locate and evaluate the effectiveness of this strategy.

An envisioned model for community development-oriented service-learning consists of service-learning that is integrated with the school curriculum and the community development agenda. From these linkages come service-learning projects, which develop in students the kinds of human and social capital communities need for local development. For example, student experiences may include learning grant writing skills, meeting and working with city officials, or preparing a presentation for a leading civic association. These particular forms of human and social capital are different from those produced by other kinds of projects, such as tutoring. All are assets that can be reused in future work toward community revitalization. The production of human and social capital for community development improves student dispositions toward future civic engagement. Thus, human and social capital are healthy by-products generated by service-learning and *indirectly* become resources for community development.

At the same time, community development-oriented service-learning projects *directly* impact communities. By working together toward a common goal, youth and adults may improve the perceptions they have of each other, reducing intergenerational barriers. Students may bring new ideas and energy to community projects, increasing the demand of community organizations for youth involvement. At the same time, organizations may realize cost savings on projects because of student labor or research. Service-learning projects may also help communities accomplish goals for community improvement in a more timely manner. These contributions all factor in to long-term community capacity and performance on goals and strategies for revitalization (see Diagram 2, Page 26).

Key assumptions

Various assumptions underlie this framework and are important to make explicit. First, it is assumed that institutional and socio-structural factors are supportive rather than restrictive of the CDOSL approach. School boards and administrators embrace the concept of service-learning and see the value in hands-on education for students about the

communities in which they live. The school environment is conducive to teaching and learning about the context and content of community development. Teachers and students have adequate knowledge and awareness of community happenings and are able to seize learning opportunities as they become available. For instance, the local historical society announcing its plans to relocate and renovate an old schoolhouse would trigger an inquiry about possible student involvement.

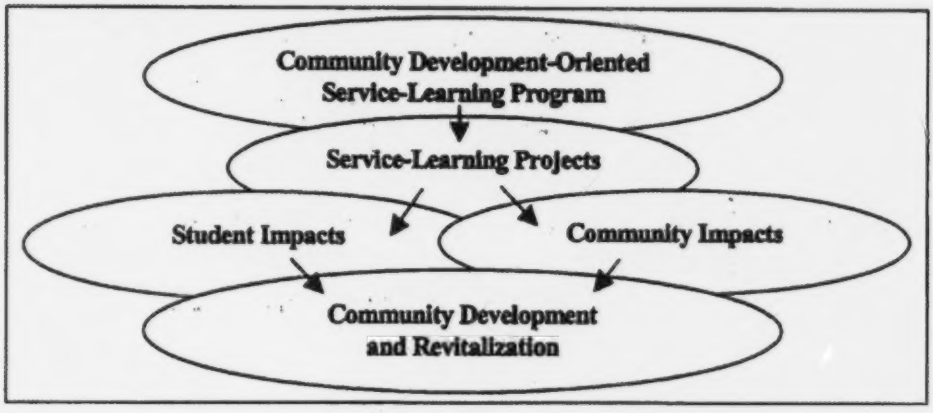


Diagram 2. Community Development-Oriented Service-Learning.

Parents do not object to their children becoming involved in projects that depart from the traditional "three Rs" and sometimes address controversial public issues. City officials and civic leaders actively promote student involvement in the community, and ensure organizational missions, structures, and procedures reflect a commitment to youth. Local government or grassroots mechanisms for community assessment, goal-setting, project development, implementation, and evaluation are in place and are effective and accessible to schools. Local officials and community leaders are able to differentiate between the community's high priorities and low priorities for local development.

It is also assumed that service-learning projects align well with standards and principles of good practice as defined by the field. Project planning and development encourages student ownership and responsibility for the outcomes of service. The project experience directly relates back to the classroom and provides structured time for student reflection or other critical project evaluation. The service performed is meaningful to students and to the community. The amount of time students spend on projects is sufficient to produce a level of impact on student learning and citizenship.

Factors influencing implementation

A number of factors can be expected to influence the implementation of a community development-oriented service-learning program. Many are common to service-learning programs in general, while some are unique to this approach. Prior research has shown that lack of time, transportation, student supervision, and teacher experience are all key issues affecting the success of service-learning programs, especially in rural areas (Parsons, 1993). In addition, a shortage of community organizations to partner with or a lack of well-defined community needs may be barriers rural programs run up against. Various studies have also shown the importance of a program coordinator for resource development and technical assistance (Kemis, 2000). This is not to mention the role of funding and in-kind support that is basic and critical to any service-learning effort.

Beyond this, several observations about implementation are worth making that establish community development-oriented service-learning as innovative practice in the field. One is that concrete examples of this approach are difficult to find among school-based service-learning programs in rural areas. A second is that incidences of overlap between goals of service-learning and community development tend to occur more by coincidence than design. Why is this? Why have not more schools and communities made these connections?

Part of the reason is the structure of community development in rural communities. Many communities do not have an organizational mechanism for coordinating community development efforts, making school-community partnerships of this kind less plausible. Another reason is because the field has continued to frame service-learning as a classroom strategy and a vehicle for school reform. Program assessment has fallen short of documenting the effects of service-learning past student, school, and

organizational levels. As a result, most schools and communities have had little if any exposure to rationales, program models, and specific examples of linking programs to community initiatives.

Local institutional barriers are also a factor that comes into play. Working collaboratively on issues requires students, teachers, and community groups to come together across organizational boundaries. Staff time, compensation, project funding, and the mutual support of school and city administrators are key factors in determining if and to what extent linkages occur. Some barriers may be exacerbated by the fact that rural communities have a smaller resource base than larger communities.

The community development-oriented service-learning approach also tends to

challenge notions about basic goals of service. To many practitioners, service means social welfare, or students providing a direct service that meets the immediate needs of a target population. However, service can also mean social justice, encompassing less direct, longer-term, and more comprehensive approaches to community problem-solving (Lisman, 1998). While social welfare remains a popular orientation, the community development approach is geared more toward social justice. Consequently, implementing community development-oriented service-learning may require teachers, coordinators, and school administrators to make a philosophical shift in their thinking about the purpose and goals of the program.

In conclusion, a community development orientation to service-learning exists in communities where the school is seen and used as a resource for community development (Salant and Waller, 1998; Miller, 1995; Hobbs, 1995; Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993). Students are viewed and engaged as equal partners in the process of community development (Des Marais et al, 2000). With this orientation, service-learning, essentially what occurs between schools and communities is the *co-production of human and social capital for future community development* (Carter, 1999; Hobbs, 1988). The actual work

of students also provides immediate, short-term benefits to community projects (Salant and Waller, 1998). It is within this framework that the development of human and social capital, and other positive impacts of service-learning, are examined on students and communities.

Terms and Definitions

Key concepts and uses

Human capital consists of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of individuals that enhance capacity for community development (Eyler and Giles, 1999; Flora, 1997; Coleman, 1988). *Social capital* refers to relationships between individuals and institutions that enhance capacity for community development (Flora, 1997; Miller, 1995; Putnam, 1993; Coleman, 1988).

Student civic capacity is used here to represent a combination of human capital and social capital. It represents the aggregate effect that these resources have on individuals predisposing them to future civic engagement (Walter et al, 2000). In other words, student civic capacity is a measure of the inclination of service-learning participants to remain interested and engaged in community development over time.

Community civic capacity refers to the collective abilities, structures, and processes of people in a community, including students, to engage in public dialogue, decision-making, and problem-solving for community development (Lisman, 1998; Lane and Dorman, 1997; Hobbs, 1995).

K-12 service-learning projects are student learning experiences arranged by schools involving the application of knowledge learned in the classroom through community service. Projects are carefully planned to address genuine community needs and involve students in critical reflection about the service performed (Corporation for National Service, 2001). For this study, selection criteria allowed for projects completed as part of the academic requirements for a course or grade level, and projects completed for a student club or organization (i.e. FFA, FCCLA, etc.), provided that the experience was coordinated by an academic advisor and had direct application to content learned in the classroom.

High priority community issues are defined here as public issues having community-wide implications and identified as priorities by community officials and citizen leaders. *Low priority community issues* are public issues identified by community leaders as relevant, but not considered to be the most pressing concerns presently facing the community. At any point in time, it is reasoned, priority issues determine the current agenda for community development. They are most likely to receive the attention of community decision-makers and change agents, and to become the focus of concerted community action.

Community development is the ongoing process by which local people organize and mobilize resources to improve the well-being of their lives and those in the community. *Community revitalization* refers to the process of restoring social, economic, and cultural vitality to marginalized communities through the development process.

Research Questions

Major questions

To address the effectiveness of K-12 service-learning as a strategy for rural community development, two major research questions were posed for the survey portion of the project. Research questions focused on the positive student and community impacts of community development-oriented service-learning.

Student impacts

The first major question was whether student participation in service-learning targeting local priorities for community improvement helps explain differences in the development of civic outcomes in students, namely human capital and social capital.

1a. Do rural students develop greater levels of human capital from CDOSL projects than from other projects?

1b. Do rural students develop greater levels of social capital from CDOSL projects than from other projects?

Community impacts

The second question dealt with establishing whether communities realize greater positive impacts from community development-oriented service-learning than from service-learning based on other approaches.

3. Do rural communities rate positive impacts of CDOSL projects more highly than other projects?

Hypotheses

For the first question, it was hypothesized that students whose service-learning experiences have targeted high

community priorities *do* develop greater levels of human and social capital than students whose service focus has been issues that communities consider less crucial. Moreover, for the second question, it was hypothesized that communities who utilize service-learning for community development *are* more positively impacted than those who do not. If proven to be true, these propositions strengthen the rationale for rural schools and communities to work together to implement service-learning as a strategy for community development.

Related questions and issues

In addition to the survey research questions, various related questions and issues were also taken into consideration. One involved finding out what is currently known and understood about K-12 service-learning as a community development strategy. Within this area, issues of similarity and difference between service-learning, place-based education, and youth governance arose. Common goals, issues and barriers to implementation, characteristics of the rural context, and the role of national service programs were all important to consider.

How schools and communities actually connect service-learning to community development was another area of interest. Here, attention was given to determining what organizational and participatory mechanisms schools use, how community goals and priorities are set, and how service-learning projects are designed to meet them. More specifically, these issues involved finding out what roles and responsibilities various stakeholders have in the process.

Likely impacts of linkages between service-learning and community development were a third area of investigation leading up to the primary questions. What benefits to students and communities are most probable? What observations can be made that these benefits have actually been realized? Related questions and issues such as these were addressed by qualitative data gathered to supplement the quantitative survey findings. While the space here does not permit a comprehensive summary of qualitative findings on related issues, those that were particularly noteworthy are included in the discussion section of the report and in the rural service-learning profiles (see Appendix I).

Design and Methods

Research design

The research design called for a combination of survey and case study research. A survey approach was chosen to collect quantitative data to test for differences in student and community impacts. The student control group consisted of non-CDOSL participants, while the experiment group included CDOSL participants. The community control group consisted of programs with only non-CDOSL projects, while the experiment group included programs with only CDOSL projects. A case study approach was used to "put a face on" the people and programs studied, and to capture the many important dimensions from each context.

There were several limitations and advantages to this design. First, combining survey and interview processes limited the number of subjects that could be studied, resulting in a small sample size and reduced generalization of findings. Because the design only measured impacts with a post-test, the comparisons of a pre- and post-test design were not possible.

On the other hand, using a two-pronged approach with quantitative and qualitative methods is rigorous, and helps to boost the validity of findings. Narrowing survey research to case study sites allowed for more intensive and in-depth data collection from subjects than would have been possible with a more extensive design. From the standpoint of time and cost, the design was appropriate under existing constraints, enabling a diverse range of cases to be sampled within a ten-month time frame and at reasonable cost.

The methods used for data collection included surveys, personal interviews, and participant observation.

Survey development

Survey development involved the construction of an original instrument using relevant variables and measures found in the literature. Indices for human capital, social capital, and community impacts were assembled using constructs from prior research on desirable outcomes of service-learning and community development (see Appendices B and C). With the exception of one trial run of the student survey, the instruments were untested prior to actual data collection.

A human capital index for students was developed using Eyler and Giles' (1999) framework for measuring civic outcomes of service-learning among college student participants. Within this framework, citizenship consists of five elements: knowledge, skills, values, efficacy, and commitment. It was reasoned that these same key ingredients leading to productive citizenship also result in a civic disposition favorable for community development. Three questions were written for each element, forming a 15-question index of community development human capital (CDHC) (see Appendix B).

A social capital index for students was also developed using a combination of variables obtained from research literature and from the 1985 General Social Survey module on socio-political participation. Perceptions of individual and group relational resources were measured on three dimensions: person to person (inter-personal interaction), person to organization (group membership), and organization to organization (partnership and collaboration). It was reasoned that each dimension characterizes a level of community networking in which social capital exists (Flora, 1997; Putnam, 1995; Coleman, 1988). Five questions relevant to service-learning experiences were formulated for each dimension, forming a 15-question index of community development social capital (CDSC) (see Appendix B).

A community impact scale was also developed from multiple sources of research documenting community-level impacts of service-learning. Questions about impacts were constructed around themes of how service-learning contributes to building community capacity and success, resulting in a 12-question index of impacts of community development-oriented service-learning (see Appendix E).

The survey developed for middle and high school students and teachers asked questions about service-learning projects, participant characteristics, and project impacts. Middle and high school students were targeted because of the differential in intellectual and social development between this age group and that of elementary students. While it is recognized that younger students are capable of understanding and impacting complex community issues through service-learning, it was reasoned that by the middle school level, students are more equipped to handle the critical thinking, analytical skills, and "adult" level discourse needed for community development work. Students at this level are also approaching a stage where service experiences may have a greater influence on their higher education and career pursuits.

As part of the survey strategy, students and teachers answered questions for the human capital and social capital scales. Student responses reflected the individual impacts of their service-learning experience, while teacher responses served as a proxy for overall student impacts. The second survey prepared for program coordinators, school officials, and community leaders asked questions about current issues and community impacts of the service-learning program. The survey strategy targeted these three informant groups to obtain perspectives on program impacts from a variety of school and community personnel. Posing survey questions to more than one informant group also allowed for triangulation of data (see Appendices D, E and F).

Personal interviews

Personal interviews were also conducted with each informant, enabling elaboration on survey responses and collection of additional information about specific projects, the service-learning program, the school system, and the community. Separate interview guides were developed to ensure consistent discussion topics and data collection for each informant group (see Appendix G).

Participant observation

Participant observation was also used during service-learning activities that happened to correspond with site visits. Most of the site visits involved trips to project sites in the community to observe the finished work of students and to meet project beneficiaries.

Methodological issues

One of the biggest methodological challenges of this project was determining whether or not service-learning projects were integrated with the community development agenda. Defining the local community development agenda is a difficult task in any context. Everyone brings different values and preferences to the process, resulting in different versions of the local agenda. The documented results of community planning are one reliable source of information spelling out goals and priorities. However, planning and decision-making processes in rural communities often do not result in formal documents for public dissemination. Because of this, greater care had to be taken in designing data collection procedures for this aspect of the project.

School and community informants were asked upfront for copies of any community plans or survey summaries covering the period of the study. In addition, rapid rural appraisal techniques were used to identify issues most important and pressing to the community at the present time. Rapid rural appraisal is a systematic approach to gaining an understanding of community issues and plans in a short time frame (International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2001). As part of the interview process, local officials and other community leaders were asked to name the top five issues facing the community as a whole. Recent newspaper articles were scanned and interview notes reviewed to see if common themes or patterns emerged.

From these sources, *local community development agenda summaries* were developed for each of the sites. Agenda summaries were then used to divide the service-learning projects for which data were collected into high and low priority categories. For each site, service-learning projects were categorized as *high priority projects* if they: 1) addressed priority issues identified in the site agenda summaries; 2) were long-term in their implication; and 3) directly affected all community members in some way. Projects not addressing issues in the site agenda summaries, or not meeting these criteria, were classified as *low priority projects*. The group of low priority projects from all sites served as the control group, while the group of high priority projects was the experiment group to test hypotheses 1a and 1b. Table 3.1 summarizes the classification of projects for which data were collected by priority (see Appendix A, Table 3.1).

To test hypothesis 2 about community impacts, the eleven sites were divided into groups based on the priority classification of their projects. Sites from which exclusively low priority project data were collected formed the "low priority" group, and served as the control group. Sites from which exclusively high priority project data were collected formed the "high priority" group, and served as the experiment group. The remaining

cases were grouped into a "mixture" category and not included in the testing of the community impact hypothesis (see Appendix A, Tables 1.2 and 5.3).

Target population, sampling, and data collection

Target population

The target population was K-12 school-based service-learning programs serving rural communities in a four state region of the Midwest (Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, and Nebraska). The sample consisted of twelve schools receiving fiscal year 2000 grant funds from state Learn and Serve America programs or the Rural School and Community Trust (see Appendix A, Table 1.1). All of the sites were located in or near a community with a rural classification under the Johnson code system. Selection criteria also included communities with an active track record of community development, evidenced by their participation in competitive state community awards and recognition programs. The National Service-Learning Leader Schools program served as a criterion, where possible, for selecting high-quality service-learning programs. Three of the eleven sites studied (Fulton, Glasco, and DeSoto) have been recognized as Leader Schools. State Learn and Serve coordinators provided guidance to ensure the selection of other quality programs. Special consideration was also given to choosing a diverse allotment of rural communities. A variety of sites were selected according to population size, racial composition, geographical location, economic base, and cultural characteristics.

Site and informant sampling

State Learn and Serve program coordinators, community betterment program coordinators, and regional staff of the Rural School and Community Trust were initially contacted to obtain data on school grantees and participating communities. With consultation from program staff, several potential study sites in each of the states were identified and contacted about participating in the study. After preliminary data was gathered from sites, three case studies in each state were selected for a total of twelve study sites. School program coordinators were officially invited to participate in the study, all of whom agreed. Site visit scheduling guidelines were forwarded to program coordinators and one-to-two day site visits were arranged.

For sampling at each site, the researcher forwarded guidelines and worked with program coordinators to determine the selection of informants (see Appendix H). Middle and high school students and teachers were chosen on the basis of their participation in service-learning activities matching and not matching criteria for community development-oriented service-learning. A mixture of projects with and without a community development orientation was selected for purposes of creating comparison groups, as described in the previous section. School officials at the building or district level were chosen on the basis of their awareness and support of the service-learning program. Visits were also requested with the local person most directly responsible for community development. Where possible, any other officials or citizens recognized as leaders in community development were also scheduled. By default, the program coordinator was

included in the interview process and rounded out the group of informants at each site. Thus, informants at each site consisted of students, teachers, site coordinators, school officials, and community leaders, all with some stake in the service-learning program.

Data collection process

The researcher administered surveys and conducted interviews during site visits scheduled at each of the selected sites. Site visits consisted of one to two days of survey and interview sessions with middle and high school students, teachers, school officials, program coordinators, and community leaders matching sampling criteria for the five informant groups (see Appendix H). At least one program coordinator, school official, and community leader was to be interviewed at each site. Group interviews were to be conducted with at least three students and teachers who had worked on the same service-learning projects.

As mentioned above, surveys and interview guides were developed specifically for the five informant groups. Surveys consisted of a combination of open-ended and close-ended questions. Multiple-choice questions asked for information on respondent demographics and project characteristics. Sections of quantitative scale questions asked about project priority, student human capital development, student social capital development, and community impacts. Scaled questions utilized a 7-point Likert scale (1= "not true at all" to 7= "very true"), so informants could respond regarding the strength of various items (see Appendix B, C and E).

Informants were given opportunity to elaborate on their responses with open-ended interview questions. Interview guides ensured a consistent and concise interview process lasting approximately forty-five minutes to one hour with each informant or group. The process consisted of the interviewer administering surveys to informants and asking interview questions. Completed surveys and interviewer notes were used to develop the master data set and reconstruct interview data. Planning documents, program hand-outs, community promotional materials, photographs, and local newspaper articles were also collected and used in developing site summaries.

Data collection problems

Several problems were encountered during the data collection process, which ultimately affected the quality of the data collected. One site visit schedule was cancelled entirely due to parent-teacher conferences the night before. In some cases, site coordinators misunderstood the data collection needs of the project, and so some scheduled sessions did not render data relevant to the research questions. Other factors, such as incomplete or interrupted interview sessions, created delays in the flow of information gathering.

Due to classroom periods beginning and ending, interview slots were often tightly scheduled, meaning that surveys sometimes had to be collected after the interview session had ended. This required additional follow-up time on the part of the researcher and the program coordinator, and some surveys were not returned after follow-up

requests were made. Despite these challenges, the quantitative and qualitative data collected from various informants represented an adequate picture of service-learning at the case study sites.

Data analysis

Data set

A master data set of survey results for the five informant groups was created in SPSS. Accuracy of data input was ensured by checking print-outs of the data set against survey sets for each site. A table of variable names, descriptions, and scale types is available for reference (see Appendix A, Table 2.1). Data screening consisted of identifying and cleaning up cases with missing or inaccurate values, and running standard checks to ensure no violation of assumptions.

Sample size

The total sample size was N=145, with survey and interview data collected from 62 students, 22 teachers, 12 program coordinators, 13 school officials, and 36 community leaders (see Appendix A, Table 3.1). Summary statistics for these groups reveals nearly equal cell sizes for students and teachers between high priority and low priority projects. Cell sizes between teachers and students varied from 11 to 34. This was anticipated since the survey strategy called for data collection from one teacher and multiple students for each project sampled. The small sample size did not permit the use of some statistical procedures such as factor analysis, but remained viable for t-tests and analysis of variance.

Reliability and validity

Because survey questions ask respondents about attitudes, perceptions, and anticipated behaviors, the level of measurement error is expected to be high. However, using scales of multiple variables to measure the same concept is one way to compensate for decreased reliability. Alpha reliability tests were run on the three dependent variable indices: human capital, social capital, and community impact. All tested out significantly above the 99 percent level, with the human capital scale at a standardized item alpha of .89, the social capital scale at .91, and the community impact scale at .86. With more than desirable levels of reliability, it was concluded that the scales are consistent measures of their concepts.

Statistical procedures

Descriptive statistics were generated to display the magnitude, range, and distribution of variables (see Appendix A, Table 2.1). Because the independent variable project priority (PROJPRIO) is discrete and the dependent variables human capital, social capital, and community impact (CDHC, CDSC, and COMMIMP) are continuous, a one-way, between-subjects analysis of variance was the procedure chosen to test for significant

differences between group means. This was the most appropriate procedure given the experimental nature of the research questions and the small size of the sample. The model was run first without and then with covariates for student age, employment status, and extracurricular activity hours per week (AGE, EMPLOY, and XTRACURR). Age was found to be a significant covariate for human capital development, explaining an additional 10 percent of the variance on that scale. However, none of the covariates registered as significant on the social capital scale, and so were excluded from the final model. Independent-sample t-tests were run to determine significant mean differences between groups. A more detailed summary of mean differences is presented in the following section.

Findings

Survey results

Respondent characteristics

Looking at the breakdown of informant demographics, forty-three percent of survey respondents were students who had participated in a service-learning project. The remaining 57 percent of respondents were teachers, school officials, program coordinators, and community leaders having some stake in the service-learning program and its impacts (see Appendix A, Table 3.1). Of the adults surveyed, 43 percent were male and 57 percent were female. Roughly one-third of school officials, two-thirds of teachers, and three out of every four program coordinators were female. Adult respondents most commonly reported working in their current positions from two to five years (37 percent). Most notably, 52 percent indicated having lived in the community for more than twenty years (see Appendix A, Table 3.3).

Fifty-two percent of the students in the sample were male and 48 percent were female. Older high school students made up the largest percentage of students surveyed. Forty-eight percent of student respondents were in grades 11 to 12, and 42 percent were 17 to 18 years old. Junior high students were also well represented, making up 24 percent of the sample, with 26 percent of students being 13 to 14 years old (see Appendix A, Table 3.3). From these figures, it appears that *service-learning experiences are more common among upper level students than lower level students in junior and senior high school.*

For employment status, students most frequently cited a part-time, year-round job (38 percent) or no job at all (34 percent). Male students were more likely to work at part-time, year-round or full-time summer jobs, whereas female students were more likely to work at part-time off-and-on jobs or no job at all. Students spent an average of 11 hours per week on extracurricular activities (see Appendix A, Table 3.3). Eighteen percent indicated they invest at least twenty hours each week on activities outside of school. After hearing multiple descriptions of schedules, it was clear that *many rural students who have had service-learning experiences during their high school career have also been engaged elsewhere in their schools and communities.*

The average number of hours students worked on service-learning projects was 140, although number of hours varied widely (see Appendix A, Table 3.3). The median number of student hours was forty-five (or two hours in the classroom and two hours in the community over a period of nine weeks). Peers (28 percent) and children (26 percent) were the age groups students worked with the most during their service-learning projects. Eighteen percent said they worked most directly with adults (other than school personnel). In addition, *nearly all service-learning projects brought students into contact with adults outside of the school system, either through project coordination, consultation, or direct service activities.* The two most common types of projects were direct service to the same recipient or group (35 percent), such as tutoring, and special projects for the community (33 percent), such as a community theater production.

Student impacts

Among items on the human capital index (CDHC), the highest average score was for student ability to work effectively in a group setting. This item received an average score of 6.46 out of 7 across all projects (see Appendix A, Table 4.1). This suggests that *service-learning projects in the sample, regardless of issue focus or community priority level, tended to teach students the importance of teamwork.*

The effects that community development-oriented projects have on students that other projects do not can be assessed through mean differences between scale items for high and low priority projects. The largest mean differences between human capital index items included student perception of community as an interesting place to live (.79), increased student awareness of community resources and problems (.62), improved student knowledge of community leaders and their roles (.52), students feeling like they belong in the community (.38), and better student understanding of how the community functions (.31). The two items with the largest mean differences were significant about the 95 percent confidence interval.

How Students Benefit from CDOSL: Human Capital

(Human capital index items having largest mean differences between high and low priority projects)

- Improved perception of community as interesting place to live
- Increased awareness of community resources and problems
- Improved knowledge of community leaders and their roles
- Greater feeling of belonging in the community
- Better understanding of how community functions

Interestingly, an index item about student expectations to be treated like adults remained constant across projects (5.82). The only item to dip below an average score of five was the low priority project average score for improved student knowledge of community leaders and their roles (4.92). This indicates that *the expectation youth have to be treated as an adult is not influenced by the priority of project to the community.* The second finding suggests that without a community development orientation, service-learning projects are less likely to introduce students to adult leaders and their work in the community.

For the analysis of variance test, seven cases were randomly deleted from the high priority group to reach equal cell sizes of N=38. *Results of the analysis of variance between high and low priority project scores for human capital did not return significant differences* (F-ratio of 1.9, .178 significance level). Hence, hypothesis 1a is not supported, meaning that *students in the sample did not gain significantly greater levels of human capital by working on high priority service-learning projects.*

For the community development social capital index (CDSC), the top mean scores on items across projects included student preference for working out rather than avoiding group conflicts, student understanding of why community groups need to cooperate, students valuing diverse views and abilities in others, and students involving and encouraging others they know to get involved (see Appendix A, Table 4.2). These items all had mean scores of at least 5.6 out of 7. As with the human capital findings, this seems to suggest that *service-learning projects, regardless of priority level, tend to promote positive attitudes about conflict resolution, cooperation, diversity, and volunteer recruitment.*

The largest mean differences between social capital index items for high and priority projects were for students knowing more adults in the community by name (.93), student confidence in presenting ideas for new projects (.81), students viewing common goals as more important than personal agendas (.61), student belief that community members can be trusted (.58), and student willingness to attend public meetings and share opinions (.48). The two items with largest mean differences were significant past the 99 percent confidence interval, while the next two highest items were significant at the 95 percent level.

How Students Benefit from CDOSL: Social Capital

(Social capital index items having largest mean differences between high and low priority projects)

- Knowing more adults in the community by name
- Greater confidence in presenting ideas to community groups
- Valuing community goals above personal agendas
- Believing community members can be trusted
- Willingness to attend public meetings and share opinions

The test for mean differences between high and low priority projects on social capital yielded a significant result* (F-ratio of 4.8, .030 significance level). Thus, hypothesis 1b is supported, meaning that *students with high priority service-learning experiences in the sample gained significantly greater levels of social capital than other students.

For student civic capacity (human and social capital scales combined), average student and teacher scores for high priority projects were nearly nine points higher than low priority projects (see Appendix A, Table 4.3). Average human capital scores differed by only three points but average social capital scores differed by close to six points between high and low priority projects. *Overall, human capital scores tended to be higher than social capital scores* (87.3 out of 105, 5.82 average item score, compared to 80.7 out of 105, 5.38 average item score), but *only social capital scores were significant between groups.*

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Community impacts

On the community impact scale, the highest scoring impacts of community development-oriented service learning projects included stronger and more cooperative school and organization relations, increased student interest in and appreciation of the community, and greater student leadership in activities outside of school (see Appendix A, Table 5.1). Each of these items produced an average score above 6.00. These findings suggest certain features of community development-oriented service-learning experiences may be more visible or meaningful to community members. The mean difference between high and low priority projects was significant at the 99 percent level for greater student leadership in activities outside school. At the 95 percent level, increased community participation in school programs and activities was also significant.

Overall, the lowest average scores tended to fall on scale items for extended youth involvement in local government decision-making and increased student participation in community planning and development activities. Low mean scores on these items indicate that the integration of youth into adult processes remains a challenge for schools and communities to overcome.

How Communities Benefit from CDOSL
(Community impact index items with highest average scores)

- Stronger, more cooperative relations between school and community organizations
- Increased student interest in and appreciation of community
- Greater student leadership in activities outside school

Areas for Improvement
(Community impact index items with lowest average scores)

- Extended youth involvement in public decision-making
- Student participation in community planning and development activities

To determine mean differences on community impacts, three sites where exclusively low priority project data was collected were labeled "low" and treated as the control group. Three sites where data was collected exclusively on high priority projects were labeled "high" and treated as the experiment group. The remaining five sites where a combination of high and low priority project data were collected were called "mixture" sites (see Tables Appendix A, 1.2 and 5.2). Experiment group sites scored on average three points higher on the community impact scale (70.4) than control group sites (67.1). Interestingly, average scores for the mixture sites registered unexpectedly low at 62.3.

To prepare for the analysis of variance procedure, six cases were randomly deleted from the mixture category, and one case was omitted from the low category, leaving equal cell sizes of N=18 for all three categories. Mean differences between the groups were significant above the 95 percent confidence level (F-ratio of 4.24, 0.20 significance level). As a result, hypothesis 2 is true, meaning *greater positive impacts accrue for communities implementing high priority service-learning projects.*

To summarize, statistical evidence was found to support one and a half of the two hypotheses proposed. *Community development-oriented service-learning produces significantly more social capital than other approaches, and community impacts of this approach also tend to be more pronounced.* On the other hand, *human capital production in students does not increase significantly more with a community development orientation.* Following is a brief discussion of these findings and their foreseen implications for the field of service-learning.

Case study findings

Exemplary cases

Case study findings provided a more descriptive and detailed look at the results returned by the survey. For purposes of comparison, the research design called for selection of rural service-learning programs exhibiting and not exhibiting a community development orientation. While findings from every site contributed to the understanding of CDOSL, several cases seemed to best exemplify this approach. Below are several examples of how schools and communities have created linkages between service-learning projects

and broader goals for community revitalization. A summary of program profiles from all eleven sites is presented in Appendix I.

Harrisburg, Missouri (pop. 184)

In Harrisburg, Missouri, a community of 184 people where K-12 school enrollment is 550, the superintendent describes the role of the school in the community as a "pseudo-Chamber of Commerce." Through the Gifted and Accelerated Program, a group of high school students took the lead in forming a community betterment committee. The committee's purpose was to identify downtown improvement projects with the town's five businesses, two churches, and one non-profit. After several beautification projects including downtown banners, storefront artwork, and a park clean-up, they realized who wasn't at the table were the adults. The community betterment committee now involves representation from school, business, and community leaders, and is in the process of becoming a 501(c)3 organization. Because of the service-learning program, the community now has an organization for coordinating community development efforts. One teacher says, "The bulletin board in the hallway is no longer the showcase of student work...the community is now the showcase." Student organizational development in towns like Harrisburg is just one outcome of service-learning in rural schools.

Glasco, Kansas (pop. 535)

Glasco, Kansas is a small farming community that has experienced declines in income and population since the Farm Crisis of the 1980s. With virtually every Main Street business gone, the once thriving community now resembles more of a ghost town. But, Glasco Chamber Pride is a small organization of townspeople who are committed to putting the community back on its feet. The organization is a major partner of the school's service-learning program. In fact, the treasurer is also the service-learning coordinator. The school has been recognized twice now as a National Service-Learning Leader School. Glasco students were involved in at least two projects last year that are found on the pages of Glasco Chamber Pride's goal statements. Through various classes, students prepared and delivered a summer arts and recreation program for pre-school age children in the city park. Twenty pre-schoolers were kept busy for eight summer weeks with activities such as wheat-weaving and chimes, using local materials found in abundance. During the course of the project, one student discovered she had leadership ability and became the project facilitator.

The second project was a community-wide celebration of the New Millennium, bringing together ten teachers and over 100 students from art, English, music, history and speech in a full-fledged community heritage production. Students made fabric panels depicting local history, interviewed the elderly, collected uniforms, and rehearsed dance and musical scores. The production was then presented to a full gymnasium of community members from Glasco and nearby Miltonvale in May, and was a huge hit!

According to the program coordinator, service-learning has been key to the survival of the community. When the program was implemented in 1995, the social atmosphere of

the town's aging population was bleak. Since then, an Arts Council formed in 1998, a Historical Society was created in 1998, and a Community Foundation was just incorporated last year. Essentially, adults in the community have begun to role-model what they have been seeking to instill in students through service-learning. What has emerged is an increase in a "can-do attitude" among community members. Glasco civil society is being reconstructed, and the community is beginning to build a response of action rather than of despair. If the old adage is true that "it takes a village to raise a child," Glasco is one community that is learning "it takes the children to raise the village."

Ainsworth, Nebraska (pop. 1,862)

In Ainsworth, Nebraska, a remote ranching community who prides itself on its motto, "The Middle of Nowhere," students for the past three years have partnered with the State Fish, Game & Parks agency, the Community Revitalization Committee, and local utilities and businesses to adopt a nearby state recreation area. The Long Pine Nature Area project has involved art, math, earth science, social science, industrial technology, and computer technology classes in an integrated effort to make improvements to the area. Students have widened the trail, built a bridge, constructed stairways and picnic areas, set up visitor information sites, and recorded and presented their work to other schools.

The project evolved from a community survey and town hall meeting conducted by the Ainsworth Community Revitalization Committee in 1998. Committee members learned that the community favored tourism as an economic development strategy, namely through increasing visitor attraction to area state parks. In 1999, the Long Pine Nature Area project was recognized among the top ten rural development projects in Nebraska.

Perhaps the most significant impact was that the project has restored relationships between Ainsworth and the nearby community of Long Pine. After the Long Pine school closed in 1996 and students were bused to Ainsworth, Long Pine residents held much animosity toward "anything Ainsworth." Decisions to hold project meetings in Long Pine, and retaining the town's name in the project, have community residents on good terms again. In effect, the service-learning project has served as a kind of bridge between two rural communities who have undergone the ordeal of school consolidation.

Implications

Distinctions of this approach

The survey and case study findings seem to agree on some key distinctions between community development-oriented service-learning and other approaches. Namely, these distinctions have to do with the type of adult-youth interaction that takes place and the kinds of impacts this interaction produces. It can be easily argued that service-learning projects, regardless of their focus, develop some form of human and social capital in students. However, the knowledge and skills students learn and the relationships they form through a community development experience become assets for them and for others down the road.

Social capital development in particular is a key impact of community development-oriented service-learning projects. Why is this? One explanation is that the relational quality of these experiences is fundamentally different from other experiences. For one, it appears that a community development orientation generates service that exposes students to "the movers and the shakers" in the community. They gain access to key leadership networks wherein they learn the dynamics of community planning and action. Secondly, with the focus on addressing local priorities, it appears that the meaningfulness of the service to students as well as to external audiences contributes to a higher quality learning experience. The basic lesson learned is that when it comes to the community issues that students address through service, priority matters.

Human capital development is an impact as well, but to a lesser degree. Although not found to be significant, the positive direction of the relationship was in keeping with the hypothesis. In both cases, qualitative findings were in keeping with the survey results. Student informants were more likely to identify relational aspects of their service-learning experience, such as knowing more adults in the community, as beneficial to them than they were cognitive aspects, such as extended community knowledge. By and large, students engaged in CDOSL projects were also more likely to report positive civic impacts, such as discovering leadership ability, confidence in working with community leaders, or out-of-school employment, than students engaged in non-CDOSL projects. This is consistent with Hamilton and Fenzel's (1988) findings on developmental impacts of youth involvement in community improvement projects compared to other kinds of projects.

Classroom-community connections

In this sample of participants, why might students have developed more significant levels of social capital from projects than

they did levels of human capital? One speculation is that the classroom learning content of the community development-oriented service-learning projects did not differ all that greatly from other projects. Connections between classroom learning and community development may not have always been made explicit. Teachers may have lacked a clear framework for building the specified outcomes into the experience. The experiences may have accomplished classroom learning objectives, but did not include special emphasis on civic learning for community development. Thus, no real differences in student learning occurred on the human capital variable as measured.

Another issue may be the fact that cases of CDOSL are few and far between, and those that were found were more coincidental linkages with local priorities than deliberate ones. Programs consisted of a variety of projects, some of which did address local priorities, and some that did not. Rarely was an entire program built solely around these linkages. Consequently, though service-learning experiences were meaningful, because projects were lacking clear learning objectives related to community development, civic learning opportunities were missed.

The findings also point out that social capital development and community impact hinge upon integrating service with coursework and community change. A connection was found between students developing social capital and communities realizing positive

impacts. Community impact scores directly corresponded with social capital development (see Appendix A, Table 5.3). Sites with high priority projects reported highest levels of community impact, and were also sites where students developed greatest levels of social capital. In fact, community impact was positively correlated with social capital (.47) and human capital (.50) above 99 percent significance.

Possible long-term outcomes

The mean differences observed between groups on index items suggest possible relationships to other outcomes. It is interesting to note parallels between certain high-score survey items and other youth-oriented outcomes desirable to today's rural communities. For instance, responses on survey items about student feelings of belonging and interest in the community correlate well with youth community satisfaction. Likewise, results on survey items about student confidence in sharing ideas and solving problems lend themselves to notions of innovation. Consequently, future research might investigate the effect that service-learning programs with a community development orientation have on rural youth entrepreneurship and retention.

Overall, the findings attest that when service-learning is rooted in the "big" issues of rural areas, students make vital contributions to the place they live and feel more invested as a result. New relationships between youth and adults are generated, which bring about more positive community perceptions of the school and strengthen future efforts toward community development. From a local investment perspective, subsidizing service-learning brings greater returns because education is contributing more directly to local development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, community development-oriented service-learning is an effective strategy by which rural schools and communities are meeting their goals together. Survey and case study findings strongly suggest that CDOSL, when properly implemented, is a sound option for revitalizing rural communities. As evidenced in the experiences of case study sites, this approach leads to successful completion of development projects, increased civic pride, organizational development, and even restored relationships between rural communities. It builds the capacity of students to become active participants and leaders in the community, and strengthens the capacity of the community to work together. In essence, service-learning becomes a "win-win-win scenario" for students, schools, and communities (Berson, 1993). The potential of service-learning to revitalize rural communities has been discovered by a few, but its full potential is yet to be tapped.

Recommendations

Schools and communities

7. **Engage students in service-learning that addresses issues of greatest importance to communities.** Teachers and program coordinators can adopt a community development orientation to service-learning by tapping into community planning and decision-making processes, monitoring where potential projects exist, and engaging students in designing projects around priority issues.

8. **Bring issues of community survival and revitalization into the service-learning classroom.** Teachers can facilitate human and social capital development by incorporating learning objectives for civic knowledge, skills, and relationship building into plans for service-learning. Ensuring students connect with community leaders and discuss or write about the issues that they are addressing captures civic learning opportunities afforded by the experience.

9. **Support teacher and school administrator involvement in community revitalization work outside the school.** School boards and officials can support integration of the school curriculum with the local community development agenda by accommodating teacher and/or administrator participation on committees, boards, task forces, or other bodies that perform a community development function.

10. **Forge school-community partnerships that open doorways for students to participate in community and economic development.** Creating linkages between service-learning and community development is clearly not the sole responsibility of the school, but of the broader community. Local government, businesses, civic organizations, and higher education institutions could begin by ensuring their decision-making structures and processes include school representation and are open to extended student participation.

11. **Provide financial and/or in-kind support for service-learning that involves students in projects addressing local priorities.** Because community development-oriented service-learning focuses on impacting issues of greatest importance to communities, it is more likely to attract the attention of sponsors. Community-minded businesses, civic clubs, foundations, and private donors seeking to invest in the future of civil society could provide financial or in-kind support for service-learning programs.

12. **Start a school-community dialogue about common goals and visions and develop mechanisms for ongoing connection between service-learning and community development.** Community change agents are in a unique position to facilitate community development-oriented service-learning. They can act as catalysts, bringing schools and communities together to identify strategies for joint action. They can also help schools create linkages by providing technical

assistance and recommending program models, best practices, and alternative courses of action.

State and national programs

5. **Recognize and reward the innovators.** Learn and Serve programs can encourage rural schools and communities to adopt or continue with this approach by recognizing and rewarding those who have been making it work. Priority in funding decisions and processes could be given to applicants who demonstrate a commitment to creating linkages between service-learning and priorities for local development. National Service-Learning Leader Schools could add the integration of service with local priorities to its standards of excellence for selecting Leader Schools.

6. **Promote project linkages to priorities through community plans and visions.** Learn and Serve programs could further support ties between service-learning and community development by encouraging grant applicants to show how service will address plans and visions established by local communities.

7. **Facilitate learning exchanges between state programs, communities, schools, and community change agents.** Learn and Serve programs can support service-learning for rural revitalization by physically and electronically bringing together the people who are doing this work to share program models, project examples, and success stories. Grantee orientations, conference tracks, and digital discussion forums could be used to increase learning and dialogue between service-learning schools and communities. The Learn and Serve Exchange could also be used as a tool for bringing community and youth development specialists into the circle. These professionals could work through the Exchange to provide schools with technical assistance in linking service-learning to revitalization efforts.

8. **Communicate this strategy option more broadly to schools and communities.** Federal and state agencies, policy groups, and national organizations working with communities on rural education and community development all have existing networks that could be utilized to spread the word throughout rural America that service-learning is a viable strategy option.

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Appendix A – Tables

Table 1.1. Case Study Sites by State

Nebraska	Iowa
Ainsworth Albion	Altoona (Southeast Polk) Corning Lacona (Southeast Warren)
Kansas	**Missouri**
DeSoto Glasgo Neodesha	Fulton Harrisburg Seneca

Table 1.2. Case Study Sites by Project Priority Level

Low priority	Mixture	High priority
Fulton Seneca DeSoto	Albion Altoona (SE Polk) Glasco Neodesha Harrisburg	Ainsworth Lacona (SE Warren) Corning

Table 1.3. Case Study Projects by Site and Priority Level

Low priority projects	High priority projects
Little Buddies mentoring (Altoona - SE Polk)	City park benches (Corning)
OASIS mentoring (Altoona - SE Polk)	Main Street cleanup (Corning)
Project Renew nature site (Altoona - SE Polk)	Altoona Community Band (Altoona - SE Polk)
American Diabetes walk-a-thon (DeSoto)	Landscaping Legion Hall (Altoona - SE Polk)
Toys for Tots (DeSoto)	Millennium celebration (Glasco)
Piano keyboard lab (Glasco)	Summer arts and recreation program (Glasco)
Conference presentation (Harrisburg)	City-wide cleanup (Neodesha)
Paw print road paintings (Harrisburg)	Web site for city (Neodesha, Albion)
Rock paw print (Harrisburg)	City Blocks early readers book (Albion)
Math Fun Night (Harrisburg)	Entrepreneur class - theatre (Albion)
Canned food drive (Seneca)	City park archway mural (Albion)
Head Start classroom (Seneca)	Senior citizen socials (Harrisburg)
Junior Chamber downtown dash (Albion)	Veteran's day program (Harrisburg)
School landscape committee (Albion)	Community betterment organization (Harrisburg)
Fulton Manor Buddies (Fulton)	Long Pine Nature Trail (Ainsworth)
Service-Learning Fridays (Fulton)	Children's summer theatre (Lacona - SE Warren)
Stream Team water quality monitoring (Fulton)	
Presbyterian Manor visits (Fulton)	

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Table 2.1. Variable Names, Descriptions, and Scale Types

Label	Description	Scale
	Independent variable	
PROJPRIO	**Project priority**	**Discrete (low, high)**
	Covariates	
AGE **GRADE** **EMPLOY** **XTRACURR**	**Student age** **Student grade level** **Student employment status** **Student extracurricular activity hours per week**	**Continuous** **Continuous (min=6, max=12)** **Discrete (5 work statuses)** **Continuous**
	Dependent variables	
CDHC	**Community development human capital**	**Continuous (composite variable of 15 scaled variable questions utilizing 7-point Likert scale, min=15, max=105)**
CDSC	**Community development social capital**	**Continuous (composite variable of 15 scaled variable questions utilizing 7-point Likert scale, min=15, max=105)**
CIVIC	**Civic disposition**	**Continuous (composite variable of 30 scaled variable questions utilizing 7-point Likert scale, sum of CDHC and CDSC, min=30, max=210)**
COMMIMP	**Community impacts of service-learning**	**Continuous (composite variable of 12 scaled variable questions utilizing 7-point Likert scale, min=12, max=84)**

Table 3.1. Survey Respondents by Project Priority and Informant Group (N=145)

Informant Group	N	% of Total	High Priority	Low Priority
Students	62	43	34	28
Teachers	22	15	11	11
Program Coordinators	12	8	--	--
School Officials	13	9	--	--
Community Leaders	36	25	--	--
Total	145	100	45	39

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Table 3.2. Student Survey Respondent Characteristics (N=62)

Characteristic	N	% of Total	% Male	% Female	Mean	Std Dev	Range
Students	62	100	52	48	--	--	--
Grade:	62	100	52	48	--	--	--
5-6	1	2	0	100	--	--	--
7-8	15	24	53	47	--	--	--
9-10	16	26	56	44	--	--	--
11-12	30	48	50	50	--	--	--
Age:	62	100	52	48	--	--	--
11-12	1	2	0	100	--	--	--
13-14	16	26	50	50	--	--	--
15-16	19	31	58	42	--	--	--
17-18	26	42	50	50	--	--	--
Employment status:	62	100	52	48	--	--	--
None	21	34	43	57	--	--	--
Part-time, off-and-on	11	18	45	55	--	--	--
Part-time, year-round	24	38	58	42	--	--	--
Full-time, summer	6	9	67	33	--	--	--
Extracurricular hours per week	60	--	--	--	10.8	7.66	35
Service-learning project hours	52	--	--	--	140.0	277.1	1759

Table 3.3. Adult Survey Respondent Characteristics (N=83)

Characteristic	N	% of Total	% Male	% Female
Adults:	83	100	43	57
Teachers	22	27	41	59
Program coordinators	12	14	25	75
School officials	13	16	62	38
Community leaders	36	43	44	56
Years in current position:	80	100	43	57
0-1	8	10	50	50
2-5	29	37	31	69
6-10	16	20	63	37
11-19	10	13	50	50
20+	17	20	41	59
Years living in community:	79	100	43	57
0-1	8	10	13	87
2-5	13	16	46	54
6-10	10	13	70	30
11-19	7	9	43	57
20+	41	52	44	56

Table 4.1. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Range of Human Capital Index Items (N=84)

Human Capital Index	Low Priority (N=39)			High Priority (N=45)			Total (N=84)		
Item	Mean	Std Dev	Range	Mean	Std Dev	Range	Mean	Std Dev	Range
Can work effectively in a group	6.53	0.65	3	6.40	0.72	3	6.46	0.68	3
Important to contribute to community well-being	6.29	0.90	3	6.36	0.91	4	6.33	0.90	4
Able to get along with adults while working together	6.13	1.04	4	6.38	0.81	3	6.27	0.92	4
Have something to offer community in future	6.11	1.01	3	6.13	0.79	3	6.13	0.89	3
Understand why people get involved in community	5.95	0.96	3	5.93	0.96	3	5.95	0.96	3
Feel like I belong in this community	5.68	1.28	4	5.98	1.22	5	5.86	1.24	5
Expect others to treat me like an adult	5.82	0.80	3	5.82	1.31	5	5.82	1.03	5
Share responsibility for future of community with others	5.66	1.10	4	5.78	1.06	3	5.74	1.08	4
Have made positive impact on community	5.58	1.08	5	5.84	0.98	3	5.74	1.03	5
Can come up with ideas for solving problems	5.66	1.34	5	5.62	1.25	4	5.65	1.28	5
Increased awareness of community resources and problems	5.37	1.44	5	*5.89	1.01	4	5.65	1.24	5
Greater desire to solve the problem	5.66	1.28	4	5.62	1.03	4	5.65	1.15	4
Community is interesting place to live	5.05	1.37	6	**5.84	1.22	4	5.50	1.35	6
Better understanding how community functions	5.16	1.41	5	5.47	1.29	4	5.33	1.34	5
Improved knowledge of community leaders and roles	4.92	1.40	6	5.44	1.10	4	5.23	1.27	6
Total	85.5	9.9	45	88.8	10.5	42	87.3	10.3	46

**p<.05; **p<.01 – significant mean differences between high and low priority categories of scale item*

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Table 4.2. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Range of Social Capital Index Items (N=84)

Social Capital Index	Low Priority (N=39)			High Priority (N=45)			Total (N=84)		
Item	Mean	Std Dev	Range	Mean	Std Dev	Range	Mean	Std Dev	Range
Group conflicts should be worked out not avoided	5.76	1.36	5	5.87	1.27	4	5.83	1.31	5
Stronger school and community relationship	5.68	1.19	5	5.93	0.96	3	5.83	1.07	5
Understand why groups need to cooperate	5.61	1.10	4	5.84	1.00	3	5.75	1.05	4
Value diversity in views and abilities	5.50	1.03	3	5.73	1.27	5	5.64	1.17	5
Involve and encourage others I know	5.45	1.43	6	5.76	1.15	4	5.63	1.29	6
Believe others here can be trusted	5.24	1.28	6	*5.82	0.89	3	5.57	1.12	6
Forming new committee or organization is good	5.24	1.30	5	5.47	1.24	4	5.38	1.27	5
More likely to join and support local associations	5.16	1.24	5	5.44	1.10	3	5.33	1.18	5
Common goals more important than personal agendas	4.95	1.16	5	*5.56	1.42	6	5.30	1.34	6
OK with presenting idea for a new project	4.79	1.70	6	**5.60	1.12	4	5.25	1.46	6
Envision self in leadership position	5.26	1.39	6	5.09	1.31	5	5.19	1.35	6
Part of a new network of people now	4.92	1.68	6	5.16	1.30	6	5.07	1.49	6
Don't mind attending meetings and sharing opinions	4.76	1.50	5	5.24	1.48	6	5.05	1.50	6
More likely to visit with local official about a concern	4.76	1.60	6	5.09	1.28	5	4.96	1.44	6
Know more adults in community by name	4.29	1.61	6	**5.36	1.48	5	4.89	1.63	6
Total	77.4	13.1	52	83.4	12.6	53	80.7	13.1	58

*$p<.05$; **$p<.01$ – significant mean differences between high and low priority categories of scale item

Table 4.3. Mean Student Outcome Scores by Priority Level and Informant Group (N=84)

Informant	Low Priority (N=39)			High Priority (N=45)			Total (N=84)		
	CDHC	CDSC	CIVIC	CDHC	CDSC	CIVIC	CDHC	CDSC	CIVIC
Students	85.6	79.2	164.8	*90.4	*85.2	*175.7	88.3	**82.5	*170.8
Teachers	85.3	72.3	157.6	82.5	75.9	158.4	83.9	74.2	158.0
Total	85.5	77.4	162.9	88.5	^83.0	171.5	87.3	80.7	168.0

**p<.05; **p<.01 – significant mean differences between student and teacher scores*
^p<.05; ^^p<.01 – significant mean differences between high and low priority categories

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Table 5.1. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Range of Community Impact Index Items (N=62)

Community Impact Index	Low Priority (N=18)			High Priority (N=19)			Mixture (N=25)			Total (N=62)		
Item	Mean	Std Dev	Range	Mean	Std Dev	Range	Mean	Std Dev	Range	Mean	Std Dev	Range
Stronger more cooperative school and organization relations	5.78	0.88	3	6.26	0.73	3	5.92	1.12	4	6.05	1.05	4
Increased student interest in and appreciation of community	5.56	0.86	3	6.21	0.79	3	5.36	1.25	4	5.98	0.95	4
More positive student perceptions of adults	5.67	0.91	3	5.63	1.12	4	5.40	1.00	4	5.77	1.19	6
Increased community participation in school programs and activities	5.72	0.96	3	*6.00	1.11	3	5.64	1.41	6	5.74	0.92	3
Greater student leadership in activities outside school	6.44	0.70	2	**6.11	0.88	3	5.72	1.28	4	5.68	1.07	4
Closer partnership between school and local government	5.94	1.06	3	5.84	1.07	3	5.16	1.57	5	5.60	1.32	5
Lower costs of projects for community organizations	4.83	1.38	5	5.84	1.07	3	5.48	1.42	4	5.58	1.25	4
More positive adult perceptions of students	5.61	0.98	3	5.89	0.88	3	5.72	0.94	3	5.55	1.00	4
More goals for community and economic development achieved	5.56	1.34	5	5.58	0.77	3	5.16	0.99	3	5.45	1.21	5
Increased student participation in community planning and development	4.83	1.58	5	5.84	1.07	3	5.38	1.47	6	5.40	1.35	5
Increased demand by organizations for service projects	5.61	0.98	3	5.84	1.12	3	5.36	1.50	4	5.60	1.05	5
Extended youth involvement in local government decision-making	4.82	1.63	5	5.11	1.49	5	4.19	1.83	6	4.65	1.70	6
Total	67.1	7.2	23	70.3	7.1	32	64.1	10.2	36	66.9	8.9	38

*$p<.05$; **$p<.01$ – *significant mean differences between high and low priority categories of scale item*

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Table 5.2. Mean and Range of Community Impact Scores of Sites by Priority Level (N=60)

Project Priority	Sites	N	COMMIMP		
			Mean	Std. Dev.	Range
Low	3	18	67.1	7.2	23
High	3	19	70.3	7.2	32
Mixture	5	25	64.1	10.5	36
Total	11	62	66.9	9.0	38

*$p<.05$; **$p<.01$ – significant mean differences between high and low priority sites

Table 5.3. Mean Scores for Community Impact, Human Capital, and Social Capital by Priority Level (N=60)

Project Priority	Sites	N	COMMIMP	N	CDHC	CDSC
Low	3	18	67.1	20	87.7	76.1
High	3	19	70.3	25	89.5	85.2
Mixture	5	25	64.1	39	85.8	80.2
Total	11	62	66.9	84	87.3	80.7

*$p<.05$; **$p<.01$ – significant mean differences between high and low priority sites

Appendix B – Student Survey

K-12 SERVICE-LEARNING AND RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

STUDENT POST-PROJECT SURVEY

SPRING 2001

ABOUT THE SURVEY

The Student Post-Project Survey is part of a national project to find out more about schools and communities think about service-learning. Some students have been involved in one school-sponsored community service project; others have participated in many. The survey focuses on your opinions and perspectives about one community service experience in particular, and activities prior to this year. If you are unclear which service experience, the interviewer will specify the project of interest before you complete the survey.

Please know that your participation in the survey and interview are totally voluntary. Hopefully, you will choose to complete both so that as much accurate information can be collected as possible. There are no right or wrong answers, so please relax and answer to the best of your ability. If you have questions about any of the items on the survey, feel free to ask the interviewer to clarify them. All of your answers and responses will be kept confidential. Results will be summarized in a report only after they have been grouped together with the responses of others. A copy of the report will be available upon request to anyone who completes the survey and interview.

The project is being conducted by Steven Henness and is sponsored by the Corporation for National Service (CNS). CNS is the agency that provides money for your school to do service-learning projects. The information being collected will help schools and communities in other rural areas plan more effective service-learning experiences for their students.

Thank you for your participation!

PART I – PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

For each of the items below, please CIRCLE the ONE that best describes you:

1. Gender	M F
2. Age	11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 Other
3. Grade level	5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 Other
4. Employment	None Part-time, off-and-on Part-time, year-round Full-time, summer Other
Please CIRCLE ALL of the areas in which you have been involved during the last year:	
5. Extra-curricular activities	Academics/honors Art/music/literature Athletics Speech/drama Student council/government Vocational clubs (FFA, FHA, etc.) Other: _____
6. On average, how many hours per week did you spend on extra-curricular activities: ___	

PART II – PROJECT INFORMATION

Please fill in the following information about the service-learning project of interest in which you were involved:

1. Name of service-learning project:	
2. Class for which service was done:	
3. Teacher:	
4. Community organization partner(s):	
5. Location of service:	
6. Community need/issue addressed:	

For each of the following, answer the question by CIRCLING ONE number which best describes your view of the service-learning project:

5. How important to the community is the issue or need addressed by the project?	Not important Very important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6. How many people in the community are affected by the issue or need the project addressed?	Affects a few Affects all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7. How many citizens in the community received some benefit because of the project?	A few citizens All citizens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. How many people did the project actually help in some way?	Small number Large number 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. Compared to other community issues or needs, how important is the issue or need addressed by the project?	Less important More important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

For each of the items below, please FILL IN or CIRCLE the answer that best describes your participation in the service-learning project:	
10. During how many weeks did you participate in the project? _____	
11. On average, how many classroom hours per week did you spend on the project? _____	
12. Approximately how many out-of-classroom hours per week did you spend on it? _____	
13. With whom did you work the most:	Children Teens Adults Staff or volunteers My peers
14. What did you usually do:	Direct service with the same person or group Direct service with different people or groups Assistance to an agency or organization Special project for a community group Coordination of other volunteers

PART III – STUDENT DIMENSIONS

To what extent are each of the following statements accurate of experience wit the service-learning project:	*Not true* **at all**						*Very true*
1. I have made a positive impact on a community problem or need.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I have increased my awareness of what resources and problems exist in the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I have a greater desire to meet the need or solve the problem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I believe I can do something in the future to improve quality-of-life in this community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I have a better understanding of how this community functions (how plans are made, goals are set, policies are adopted, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I think this community is an interesting place to live.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I have more knowledge of who leaders are and what their roles are in the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I can get aion well with adults while working toward a common goal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I can better understand why people get involved and do things for the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I feel like I belong in this community instead of somewhere else.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. I can expect others in the community to treat me like an adult.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I think it is important to contribute to the well-being of the place where one lives.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. I know how to work effectively within a group to get things done.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. I can come up with ideas and ways to solve problems facing the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. I need to share responsibility for shaping the future of the community with others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

PART IV – COMMUNITY DIMENSIONS

Based on what you gained from your participation in the service-learning project, how accurate are each of the following statements:	*Not true* **at all** *Very true*
1. I know more adults in the community by name.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. I am more likely to become a member and support the work of a community group.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. Because of the project, the school has a stronger relationship with the community.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4. In general, I believe others in this community can be trusted.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5. I can picture myself in a leadership position in this community.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6. I have a broader understanding of why community groups should cooperate with each other.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7. I see a diversity of views and abilities in people as a good thing.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. Because of the project, I now interact with a new network of people.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. I think starting a committee or an organization is a good way of addressing common concerns.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. I invite and encourage others I know to get involved.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11. I have no problem attending public meetings and sharing my ideas and opinions with others.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12. I believe community groups should have common goals rather than their own individual goals.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13. I am more likely now to go and visit with a local official about an issue that concerns me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
14. I am comfortable presenting an idea for a new project to a community organization.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15. I think it is more important for groups to work through conflicts than to avoid them.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Appendix C – Teacher Survey

K-12 SERVICE-LEARNING AND RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

TEACHER POST-PROJECT SURVEY

SPRING 2001

ABOUT THE SURVEY

The Teacher Post-Project Survey is part of a national project to find out more about what schools and communities think about service-learning. Some teachers have only begun to implement service-learning projects; others have organized many. The survey focuses on your opinions and perspectives about one service-learning project in particular, and activities prior to this year. If you are unclear which service project, the interviewer will specify the project of interest before you complete the survey.

Please know that your participation in the survey and interview are totally voluntary. Hopefully, you will choose to complete both so that as much accurate information can be collected as possible. There are no right or wrong answers, so please relax and answer to the best of your ability. If you have questions about any of the items on the survey, feel free to ask the interviewer to clarify them. All of your answers and responses will be kept confidential. Results will be summarized in a report only after they have been grouped together with the responses of others. A copy of the report will be available upon request to anyone who completes the survey and interview.

The project is being conducted by Steven Henness and is sponsored by the Corporation for National Service (CNS). CNS is the agency that provides grant funds to your school to do service-learning projects. The information being collected will help schools and communities in other rural areas plan more effective service-learning experiences for their students.

Thank you for your participation!

PART I – PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

For each of the items below, please CIRCLE the ONE that best describes you:

1. Gender	M F
2. Grade level(s) taught	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 Other
3. Years in present position	0-1 2-5 6-10 11-19 20+
4. Years living in community	0-1 2-5 6-10 11-19 20+

PART II – PROJECT INFORMATION

Please fill in the following information about the service-learning project of interest that you facilitated:

1. Name of service-learning project	
2. Class for which service was done	
3. Community organization partner(s)	
4. Location of service	
5. Community need/issue addressed	

For each of the following, answer the question by CIRCLING ONE number which best describes your view of the service-learning project:

6. How important to the community is the issue or need addressed by the project?	Not important Very important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7. How many people in the community are affected by the issue or need the project addressed?	Affects a few Affects all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. How many citizens in the community received some benefit because of the project?	A few citizens All citizens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. How many people did the project actually help in some way?	Small number Large number 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10. Compared to other community issues or needs, how important is the issue or need addressed by the project?	Less important More important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
For each of the items below, please FILL IN or CIRCLE the answer that best summarizes student participation in the service-learning project:	
11. During how many <u>weeks</u> did students participate in the project? _____	
12. On average, how many <u>classroom hours per week</u> did students spend on the project? _____	
13. Approximately how many <u>out-of-classroom hours per week</u> did students spend on it? _____	
14. With whom did students work <u>most</u>:	Children Teens Adults Staff or volunteers Peers
15. What did students usually do:	Direct service with the same person or group Direct service with different people or groups Assistance to an agency or organization Special project for a community group Coordination of other volunteers

PART III – ISSUES AND BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION

List up to five issues and/or barriers you have encountered in implementing service-learning in the classroom, school system, and/or community. In order of most to least important, how would you rank them?

Issues or barriers	**Rank**

PART IV – COMMUNITY STRENGTHS AND ADVANTAGES

What strengths and/or advantages do you think this school and/or community offer for effectively implementing service-learning? In order of most to least important, how would you rank the top five?

Strengths or advantages	**Rank**

PART V - STUDENT DIMENSIONS

To what extent are each of the following statements accurate of the experience your students had with the service-learning project:	*Not true at all*						*Very true*
1. It made a positive impact on a community problem or need.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. It increased their awareness of community resources and problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. It gave students a greater desire to see the need met or problem resolved.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. It developed a belief in students that they can do something in the future to improve quality-of-life in the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. It gave students a better understanding of how the community functions (how plans are made, goals are set, policies are adopted, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. It convinced them this community is an interesting place to live.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. It provided students with knowledge of who leaders are and what their roles are in the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. It taught them that they can get along well with adults while working toward a common goal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. It helped students better understand why people get involved and do things for the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. It gave them a greater feeling of belonging in the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. It built an expectation in students that others in the community will treat them like adults.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. It assisted them in seeing the importance of contributing to the well-being of the place where they live.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. It showed students how to work effectively within a group to get things done.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. It helped them come up with ideas to solve community problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. It taught students the need to share responsibility for shaping the future of the community with others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

PART VI – COMMUNITY DIMENSIONS ***Based on your assessment of student participation in the service-learning project and what they gained from the experience, how accurate are the following statements:***	***Not true at all*** ***Very true***
1. Students know more adults in the community by name.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. They are more likely to become a member of and support a community group.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. The school has a stronger relationship with the community.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5. In general, students believe others in the community can be trusted.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5. Students see themselves in leadership positions in the community.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6. Students have a broader understanding of why community groups should cooperate with each other.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. They view diversity of ideas and abilities in people as a good thing.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. Students are now able to interact with a new network of people.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. Students think forming a committee or an organization is a good way to address common concerns.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. Students invite and encourage others they know to get involved.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11. Students have no problem attending public meetings and sharing their ideas and opinions with others.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12. Students believe community groups should have common goals instead of each having their own goals.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13. Students are more likely to go and visit with a local official about an issue that concerns them.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
14. Students are comfortable presenting an idea for a new project to a community organization.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15. Students think it is important for community groups to work through conflict rather than to avoid it.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Appendix D – Program Coordinator Survey

K-12 SERVICE-LEARNING AND RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

PROGRAM COORDINATOR SURVEY

SPRING 2001

ABOUT THE SURVEY

The Program Coordinator Survey is part of a national project to find out more about what schools and communities think about service-learning. Some coordinators have been working with programs to implement service-learning projects for a long time; others have just begun. The survey focuses on your opinions and perspectives about the service-learning program, and certain service-learning projects in particular, prior to this year. If you are unclear which service-learning projects, the interviewer will specify them before you complete the survey.

Please know that your participation in the survey and interview are totally voluntary. Hopefully, you will choose to complete both so that as much accurate information can be collected as possible. There are no right or wrong answers, so please relax and answer to the best of your ability. If you have questions about any of the items on the survey, feel free to ask the interviewer to clarify them. All of your answers and responses will be kept confidential. Results will be summarized in a report only after they have been grouped together with the responses of others. A copy of the report will be available upon request to anyone who completes the survey and interview.

The project is being conducted by Steven Henness and is sponsored by the Corporation for National Service (CNS). CNS is the agency that provides grant funds to schools for service-learning projects. The information being collected will help schools and communities in other rural areas plan more effective service-learning experiences for their students.

Thank you for your participation!

PART I – PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

For each of the items below, please CIRCLE the ONE that best describes you:

1. Gender	M F
2. Years in present position	0-1 2-5 6-10 11-19 20+
3. Years living in community	0-1 2-5 6-10 11-19 20+

PART II – PROJECT INFORMATION

Please fill in the following information about the service-learning projects for which teachers and students have been selected to be interviewed:

Name of service learning project	**Names of teachers and students selected**

PART III – PROJECT INFORMATION

For each of the following questions, answer by CIRCLING ONE number which best describes your view of the service-learning program:

1. How important to the community are the issues or needs addressed by service-learning projects?	Not important Very important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. Generally, how many people in the community are affected by the issues or needs that projects address?	Affect a few Affect all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. How many citizens in the community typically receive some benefit from service-learning projects?	A few citizens All citizens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4. How many people do projects actually help in some way?	Small number Large number 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5. Relatively speaking, how important are the issues or needs addressed by projects compared to other issues and needs in the community?	Less important More important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

PART IV – ISSUES AND BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION

List up to five issues and/or barriers you have encountered in implementing service-learning in the school system and/or community. In order of most to least important, how would you rank them?

Issues or barriers	**Rank**

PART V -- COMMUNITY STRENGTHS AND ADVANTAGES

What strengths and/or advantages come to mind that this school and/or community offer for effectively implementing service-learning? In order of most to least important, how would you rank the top five?

Strengths or advantages	**Rank**

PART VI – IMPORTANT PUBLIC ISSUES

List five important public issues that are presently facing the community and affect everyone who lives here. Please be as specific as you can (examples: low-paying jobs, youth substance abuse, deteriorating parks, etc.). In order of most to least important, how would you rank them?

Important public issues	**Rank**

PART VII – COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

To what extent are the following statements accurate of what has occurred over the life of the service-learning program?	**Not true at all**						**Very true**
1. Students have demonstrated increased interest in and appreciation for the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Students have exhibited greater leadership in non-school aspects of community life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Student perceptions of adults have become more positive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Adult perceptions of students have become more positive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. The school has formed stronger, more cooperative relationships with community organizations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. The school has developed closer partnerships with local government.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Student participation in community planning and development activities has increased.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Community participation in school programs and activities has increased.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. The demand for service-learning projects by community organizations has increased.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Local government has taken additional steps to involve youth in public decision-making.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Community organizations have incurred lower costs associated with community projects due to student work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. The community has achieved more of its goals for community and economic development.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Other:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Other:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Other:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix E – School Official Survey

K-12 SERVICE-LEARNING AND RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

SCHOOL OFFICIAL SURVEY

SPRING 2001

ABOUT THE SURVEY

The School Official Survey is part of a national project to find out more about what schools and communities think about service-learning. Some school officials have worked very closely with schools in implementing service-learning projects; others have been supporters more from a distance. The survey focuses on your opinions and perspectives about the service-learning program, the school system, the community, and the role of young people in civic affairs.

Please know that your participation in the survey and interview are totally voluntary. Hopefully, you will choose to complete both so that as much accurate information can be collected as possible. There are no right or wrong answers, so please relax and answer to the best of your ability. If you have questions about any of the items on the survey, feel free to ask the interviewer to clarify them. All of your answers and responses will be kept confidential. Results will be summarized in a report only after they have been grouped together with the responses of others. A copy of the report will be available upon request to anyone who completes the survey and interview.

The project is being conducted by Steven Henness and is sponsored by the Corporation for National Service (CNS). CNS is the agency that provides grant funds to schools for service-learning projects. The information being collected will help schools and communities in other rural areas plan more effective service-learning experiences for their students.

Thank you for your participation!

PART I – PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

For each of the items below, please FILL IN or CIRCLE the ONE answer that best describes you:

1. Gender	M F
2. Current position	
3. Years in current position	0-1 2-5 6-10 11-19 20+
4. Years living in community	0-1 2-5 6-10 11-19 20+
5. Other current involvement in community affairs (titles or offices such as committee chair, club secretary, etc.)	_____ _____ _____

PART II – IMPORTANT COMMUNITY ISSUES

List five important public issues that are presently facing the community and affect everyone who lives here. Please be as specific as you can (examples: low-paying jobs, youth substance abuse, deteriorating parks, etc.). In order of most to least important, how would you rank them?

Important public issues	**Rank**
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

PART III – COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

To what extent are the following statements accurate of what has occurred over the life of the service-learning program?	**Not true at all**						**Very true**
1. Students have demonstrated increased interest in and appreciation for the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Students have exhibited greater leadership in activities outside of school.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Student perceptions of adults have become more positive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Adult perceptions of students have become more positive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. The school has formed stronger, more cooperative relationships with community organizations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. The school has developed closer partnerships with local government.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Student participation in community planning and development activities has increased.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Community participation in school programs and activities has increased.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Community organizations have increased the demand for service-learning projects.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Local government has taken steps to extend the involvement of youth in public decision-making.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Community organizations have incurred lower costs associated with community projects due to student work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. The community has achieved more of its goals for community and economic development.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Other:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Other:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Other:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix F – Community Leader Survey

K-12 SERVICE-LEARNING AND RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

COMMUNITY LEADER SURVEY

SPRING 2001

ABOUT THE SURVEY

The Community Leader Survey is part of a national project to find out more about what schools and communities think about service-learning. Some community leaders have worked very closely with schools in implementing service-learning projects; others have been supporters more from a distance. The survey focuses on your opinions and perspectives about the community, the school system, and the role of young people in civic affairs.

Please know that your participation in the survey and interview are totally voluntary. Hopefully, you will choose to complete both of them so that as much accurate information can be collected as possible. There are no right or wrong answers, so please relax and answer to the best of your ability. If you have questions about any of the items on the survey, feel free to ask the interviewer to clarify them. All of your answers and responses will be kept confidential. Results will be summarized in a report only after they have been grouped together with the responses of others. A copy of the report will be available upon request to anyone who completes the survey and interview.

The project is being conducted by Steven Henness and is sponsored by the Corporation for National Service (CNS). CNS is the agency that provides grant funds to schools for service-learning projects. The information being collected will help schools and communities in other rural areas plan more effective service-learning experiences for their students.

Thank you for your participation!

PART I – PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

For each of the items below, please FILL IN or CIRCLE the ONE answer that best describes you:

1. Gender	M F
2. Current position	
3. Years in current position	0-1 2-5 6-10 11-19 20+
4. Years living in community	0-1 2-5 6-10 11-19 20+
5. Other current involvement in community affairs (titles or offices such as committee chair, club secretary, etc.)	_____ _____ _____

PART II – IMPORTANT PUBLIC ISSUES

List five important public issues that are presently facing the community and affect everyone who lives here. Please be as specific as you can (examples: low-paying jobs, youth substance abuse, deteriorating parks, etc.). In order of most to least important, how would you rank them?

Important public issues	**Rank**
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

PART VII – COMMUNITY OUTCOMES OF STUDENT SERVICE

To what extent are the following statements accurate of what has occurred over the life of the school's service-learning program?	**Not true at all**						**Very true**
1. Students have demonstrated increased interest in and appreciation for the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Students have exhibited greater leadership in activities outside of school.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Student perceptions of adults have become more positive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Adult perceptions of students have become more positive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Community organizations have formed stronger, more cooperative relationships with the school.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Local government has developed closer partnerships with the school.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Student participation in community planning and development activities has increased.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Community participation in school programs and activities has increased.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Community organizations have increased the demand for service-learning projects.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Local government has taken steps to extend the involvement of youth in public decision-making.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Community organizations have incurred lower costs associated with community projects due to student work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. The community has achieved more of its goals for community and economic development.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Other:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Other:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Other:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix G – Interview Guides

K-12 SERVICE-LEARNING AND RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
STUDENT POST-PROJECT INTERVIEW
SPRING 2001

1. Tell me a little about yourself.
In general, do you like this school?
In general, do you like this community as a place to live?

2. Tell me a little about the service-learning project.
What did the project consist of?
What was the goal of the service you did? What part did you play?
Who did you meet? Who did you work with?
What did you do in class that pertained to the project (discussion, journal, write about experience, analyze problem or propose solution, present to community group)?

3. Tell me a little about your reactions to the project.
What did you like about it? What did you dislike about it?
How do you think the community benefited from your service?
Would you say the project was a success overall?
Is there anything about the project you would have done differently?
Now that you have had a service-learning experience, would you try it again sometime?

4. Now tell me a little about what you learned from doing service.
What do you think you learned most of all from the experience?
What did you learn about the community as a place to live?
What did you learn about getting things accomplished in the community (people, organizations, processes, or policies)?
What did you learn about the responsibilities that community members have?

5. Finally, tell me what your opinions are on a few things.
Do you see yourself as having certain responsibilities as a member of the community?
In general, how do community members view young people?
What does the community need or want that you think students could do?
Have you made any plans for after you graduate?
Do you see yourself being involved in the community apart from school after you finish?

K-12 SERVICE-LEARNING AND RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

TEACHER PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW
SPRING 2001

1. Tell me a little about yourself.
What is the number one reason you use service-learning as a teaching method for students?
In general, do you like this school?
In general, do you like this community as a place to live?
Are you involved in the community in other ways besides school?

2. Tell me a little about the service-learning project.
How did the project idea originate? How was the need or issue identified?
What part did students play?
What was the main goal of the service students performed?
Who did students work with?
What did students learn in the classroom that they applied through their service?
How did you handle reflection?

3. Tell me a little about how the project went.
Would you say the project was a success overall?
Were there any roadblocks you encountered along the way?
Is there anything about the project you would have done differently?
How do you think the community benefited from the service students did?
What specific responses did you receive from the partner organization(s) or community?
What visible impacts did the project leave on the community?
Has any follow-up action taken place in the community because of the project?
Do you plan to use service-learning again?

4. Now tell me a little about what your students learned from doing service.
What do you think they learned most of all from the experience?
What did they learn about the community as a place to live?
What did they learn about getting things accomplished in the community (people, organizations, processes, or policies)?
What did they learn about the responsibilities that community members have?

5. Finally, tell me what your opinions are on a few things.
In general, how do members of this community view young people?
What does the community need or want that you think students could do?
What would you like to see happen in the community that you think students could address through service-learning?

K-12 SERVICE-LEARNING AND RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
PROGRAM COORDINATOR INTERVIEW
SPRING 2001

1. Tell me a little about the structure of the service-learning program.
How is the program staffed? How many FTE?
How is the program governed, and by whom?
What is your annual budget? What are the sources and amounts of grants received?
School match? Private financial or in-kind support?
Is there any routine process the program uses for planning and designing service projects?
How does the program ensure projects meet real community needs?
How does the program ensure real curricular integration and meaningful service occur?
How are evaluation and reporting handled?
Has the program utilized other national service programs or resource providers?
Is there any interaction or overlap between this program and other school-based programs?

2. Tell me a little about the performance of the program.
What are a few of the program's major successes to date? Major challenges?
What are the program's main goals at this point?
What impacts does the program try to have on students? School? Community?
Are there any evidences that hint at success in these areas? What outcomes have been realized?
What is visible in the community as a result of service-learning?
What has happened in the community subsequent to service-learning projects?
Have any special honors or awards been received by individuals or school-wide? Inside or outside community?

3. Tell me a little about the specific service-learning projects that have been implemented.
List of service-learning projects that have been implemented?
Funded by grants, not funded by grants? Plans for the future?
Which teachers? Which classes? Which students?
Which public issues or needs?
Which community partners?
Project duration and intensity?
Linkage to broader community goals?

4. Finally, tell me your opinion on a few things.

In general, how do members of the community view young people?
In general, what do you think of engaging students directly in community problem-solving?
What does the community need or want that students could do?
What would you like to see happen in the community that service-learning could address?
What opportunities exist for more tightly linking community goals and needs with projects?

K-12 SERVICE-LEARNING AND RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
SCHOOL OFFICIAL INTERVIEW
SPRING 2001

1. Tell me a little about the school system.
What is unique about this school system? Any stories or traditions that come to mind?
What have been milestones over last few years?
Changes in enrollment? New or expanded facilities? Role of technology?

2. Tell me a little about the relations between the school and the community.
How would you characterize historical relations between community and school?
How supportive have taxpayers been of education?
Level of business support? Parental involvement?
What do citizens value most about school?
What has been role of school in community and economic development?
How would you describe relations between school and local government officials today?

3. Tell me a little about the status of the service-learning program.
How does service-learning relate to other school reform efforts?
Where does it fall in terms of your priorities for programs?
What level of influence do you choose to exercise in direction of service-learning?
What projects? What issues and needs addressed? Relative importance?
Purposeful links to broader community goals or needs?
Issues and barriers to implementation?
Strengths and advantages for implementation?

4. Now, tell me a little more about the performance of the program.
What impacts are you seeking on students? School? Community?
What evidences hint at success in these areas? What outcomes have been realized?
What is visible in the community as a result of service-learning?
What has happened in the community subsequent to service-learning projects?
What is your vision for service-learning here?
How is program addressing issues of sustainability?

5. Finally, tell me your opinion on a few things.
In general, how do members of the community view young people?
In general, what do you think of engaging students directly in community problem-solving?
What does the community need or want that students could do?
What would you like to see happen in the community that service-learning could address?
What opportunities exist for more tightly linking community goals and needs with projects?

K-12 SERVICE-LEARNING AND RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
COMMUNITY LEADER INTERVIEW
SPRING 2001

1. Tell me a little about the community.
How would you describe the town and its people to someone who had never been here before?
What words would you use to persuade someone to come and visit?
What is the community known for most? Traditions or stories that come to mind?
What is a historical high point in the history of the community? Low point?
What have been local economic milestones in last 10 years? Major employers, income sources?
Population changes? Cultural shifts? Social atmosphere?

2. Tell me a little about community and economic development activity.
Examples of major achievements?
Participation in community betterment program? Special honors or awards received?
Examples of recent projects on which various agencies or organizations are partnering?
Organizational activity? New groups?
Level of leadership? Level of civic involvement?
How does the community determine its goals and needs? Process? Who involved?
Regular planning efforts by local government? Citizen groups?
Does community have current strategic plan? Community assessment?
Other mechanisms for community participation and decision-making (town meetings, etc.)?
What is vision for future?

3. Tell me a little about relations between the community and the school.
How would you characterize historical relations between community and school?
How supportive have taxpayers been of education?
Level of business support? Parental involvement?
What do citizens value most about school?
What has been role of school in community and economic development?
How would you characterize relations between local government and school officials today?

4. Tell me a little about your awareness of the service-learning program.
Which projects? Which teachers? Which students?

Which community partners?
Which public issues or needs addressed? Relative importance?
Purposeful links to broader community goals or needs?
What is visible in the community as a result of service-learning?
What has happened in the community subsequent to service-learning projects?

5. Finally, tell me your opinion on a few things.
In general, how do members of the community view young people?
In general, what do you think of engaging students directly in community problem-solving?
What does the community need or want that students could do?
What would you like to see happen in the community that service-learning could address?
What opportunities exist for more tightly linking community goals and needs with projects?

Appendix H – Site Visit Info Form

K-12 Service-Learning in
Rural Schools for Community Development
School-Community Site Information Form

I. Program coordinator

Person in charge of service-learning program:

Phone number 1:

Phone number 2:

Fax number:

Email:

Length of tenure in position:

II. School/program characteristics

Length of time program has been in existence (prior to this year):

Number of years receiving Learn & Serve grants (prior to this year):

Scope of program (district, school, building):

Type of program (school-wide, grade-wide, discipline-wide, individual courses):

Level of instruction (K-12, high school, middle school, elementary):

Size of enrollment:

Number of teachers participating last year:

Number of students participating last year:

Number of agencies/organizations partnering on projects last year:

Name of school official most knowledgeable/involved in program:

Name of local government official most knowledgeable/involved in program:

III. Service-learning projects:

Examples of past/present projects providing direct benefits to the whole community:

Names of teachers most active in/enthusiastic about these projects:

Names of students exhibiting most interest/progress/leadership in these projects:

Names of community people most active in/enthusiastic about these projects:

Special activities or events planned for January to March 2001:

IV. Community development

Name of person in charge of community and/or economic development for the community (city employee, committee chairperson, or community leader):

Name of organization responsible for coordinating community improvement efforts:

Contact person for organization:

Phone number:

Rural K-12 Service-Learning Profiles: Summaries of 11 Case Study Schools and Communities

Author's comments and disclaimer

The eleven rural service-learning profiles that follow are an outsider's snapshot of the service-learning programs, schools, and communities in which I conducted rapid rural appraisal (emphasis on rapid). For each of the case study sites, in the order they were conducted, brief summaries of the *community background*, *economic conditions*, and *civic environment* are drawn up. I have also included a few basic facts and observations about the *school system*, the *service-learning program*, and specific *projects* that have been implemented, both high priority and low priority projects. *Strengths and barriers* having an influence on the success of rural service-learning, and what informants consider *priority community issues* are also listed. It should be noted that the *strategic opportunities* section is simply a few suggestions for linking service-learning with community priorities based on the data available, and should only be treated as such. Finally, the *lessons learned* from each site are included as they relate to service-learning as a rural community development strategy.

It is my hope that the site visit process did far more for the informants than it did for the purposes of this project. Hopefully, it allowed informants to affirm strengths and accomplishments, acknowledge issues, and reveal areas for improvement. It is also my hope that informants were empowered by the opportunity to articulate, and in some ways to discover, their own ideas and opinions about their schools, their communities, and the future. As a result, I hope their participation in the project has brought about an increased sense of confidence and resolve with which to take on the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

For other readers of this report, it is my hope that the following summaries will shed light on rural issues of national importance, and to illustrate characteristics found among their own programs, communities, and/or constituents. It is my aim with these profiles to enable readers to better understand the rural context of service-learning, and to be motivated to consider its potential as a rural development strategy on their own terms.

Harrisburg, Missouri *Pop. 184*

Community background

Harrisburg is a small community of less than 200 people set in the rolling pastures and farmland of central Missouri. Harrisburg lies 20 miles north off of Interstate 70, about 30 minutes from the nearest population center of Columbia. Situated on the edge of a downtown district that consists of five businesses, two churches, a park, and a non-profit day care center, the Harrisburg school maintains a strong physical, social, and economic presence in the community.

Economic conditions

The local economy has been strained in recent years. Agricultural families are earning less in income and more working age residents are leaving or commuting to jobs outside the community. School and community officials relay concern about the economic viability of their community, and maintaining a balance between urban fringe growth potential and the preservation of a small town atmosphere.

Civic environment

A tightly woven social fabric characterizes the Harrisburg community, with emphasis placed on preserving faith and family values, and honoring older generations. High turnout for community events is the norm. The Harrisburg Volunteer Fire Department remains the most visible and active civic group in town.

School system

The Harrisburg School District serves over 100 square miles of Boone and Howard Counties, and has a K-12 enrollment of 576 students, most of whom live in outlying parts of the district. The school system consists of Harrisburg Elementary, Harrisburg High School, and most recently, the Harrisburg South Campus, which was opened for use by junior high classes in February 2001.

Service-learning program

The service-learning program has been in existence since 1991. The first major project involved a large portion of community members in converting a piece of donated property into an outdoor classroom. The Learn and Serve program is now the school's Gifted and Accelerated program for students in grades 5-12. Students who maintain a grade-point average of 3.25, are referred by a teacher, and write an essay can participate in the program. The program is facilitated by two part-time coordinators, one of which also carries teaching responsibilities. The program is becoming well-known as a model for other rural schools in the region, and students and teachers have presented their accomplishments at state and national conferences.

Service-learning projects

Service-learning projects thus far have included construction of an outdoor classroom and greenhouse, the formation of a community betterment committee, downtown district banners, storefront artwork, old schoolhouse renovation, Veteran's Day program, senior citizen socials, and a school-based newspaper, among others.

Strengths and barriers

The major characteristics cited as advantageous to service-learning in Harrisburg include community participation and support of the school, school-wide participation and support of the program, and parental involvement and support of activities. The main barriers to service-learning include a lack of time for teacher preparation and program coordination. Some informants also point to the need for greater buy-in from teachers and better support from school administrators.

Priority community issues

In order of rank, the public issues people named as priorities for the future of Harrisburg included rising school enrollment and the need for expanded school capacity, senior citizen activities and health facilities, youth recreation and job opportunities, downtown preservation and business attraction, and increased planning and public communication.

Strategic opportunities

According to informants, students stand a strong chance of continuing to work with adults toward the completion of the Harrisburg South Campus facility. Planning and contributing to the development of a senior citizen center and/or museum through service-learning are also real possibilities. Since it has also been recognized that Harrisburg does not have an official written history, student documentation projects may be another opening for service-learning.

Lessons learned

When service-learning doubles as a school's Gifted and Accelerated program, it is a two-edged sword. On one hand, the most motivated and academically successful students participate in the program, and, as a result, the community stands a good chance of being positively impacted by the talents and abilities of outstanding participants. On the other hand, students who are not eligible for the program may miss opportunities to greatly benefit from service-learning. Coordinators and educators also face the challenge of ensuring Gifted and Accelerated program activities maintain real ties to classroom learning.

A key civic impact of service-learning in rural communities like Harrisburg is organizational development. In this case, service-learning students were out in front initiating a dialogue about improving the community, which led to community action on specific projects, and eventually the birth of a new community organization.

Fulton, Missouri *Pop. 12,128*

Community background

Coined the northeast corner of mid-Missouri's "Golden Triangle," Fulton is a mid-sized rural community connecting with larger population centers of Columbia and Jefferson City. The community is a growing center of commerce and education, with its population surpassing 12,000 in the 2000 Census. It is home to William Woods University and Westminster College, the site of the famous "Iron Curtain" speech delivered by Sir Winston Churchill following World War II. Several state health and correctional facilities are also located in town.

Economic conditions

In recent years, economic conditions have followed a transitional pattern. City leaders indicate the closing of several manufacturers, including two shoe factories, as setbacks since 1980. A larger percentage of residents are commuting to nearby centers for work, and informants express concern over widening socio-economic levels between residents. At the same time, Fulton maintains a solid and growing base of industry. The Chamber of Commerce has maintained strong participation from the business community. Fulton Area Development Corporation was formed in 1991, and is working to market Fulton's location as prime for new industry. With population growing, employment is expanding, with five new businesses opening last year. According to community leaders, city administration has provided sound leadership in the process. The city completed a strategic planning process last fall, and plans for the construction of a new town hall are underway.

Civic environment

The Fulton area is reputed for its spirit of independence, as reflected in its Civil War era distinction as the "Kingdom of Callaway." School activities receive top-notch support from parents and community members. The Fall Festival in downtown Fulton is an important community gathering for residents. A community action agency acts as a hub for many social programs and services in the community.

School system

The Fulton School System consists of three elementary schools, a middle school, a high school, and an alternative school for high school students. Current enrollment is 2,400 system-wide. The school district has received national recognition for student achievements in academics, music, and community service.

Service-learning program

The program coordinator shoulders a myriad of other duties in addition to service-learning, including A+ Schools, School-to-Work, high school volunteer coordination, leadership among peer mentors of the Learn and Serve America Exchange, and most recently, an AmeriCorps tutoring grant. A council of local agency representatives and students serve as advisors to the program. Fulton Academy, the alternative school, was recognized in 2000 as a National Service-Learning Leader School, and this year received the local Chamber's inaugural community service award.

Service-learning projects

The Stream Team project involves high school science students in applying classroom learning to clean-up a local stream and collect data for a Missouri Department of Conservation water quality program. A social skills class helps students learn personal and social development through interaction with nursing home residents. Upper level high school students tutor elementary students through a tutoring class taught by the program coordinator. Service-Learning Fridays is Fulton Academy's program, placing students in charge of planning and leading their peers in weekly service activities to assist local agencies.

Strength and barriers

The leading strengths identified for the program include student interest, learning, and concern about service; student leadership and ownership of projects; strong program coordination; and support from school administration. Barriers to a more effective program include lack of teacher time, transportation technicalities, student attendance and reliability, and poor weather.

Priority community issues

According to school and community informants, the top five issues facing Fulton include substance abuse; poverty, unemployment, and the need for better-paying jobs; technical training for a skilled labor force, extracurricular academic support and activities for youth; and quality affordable housing.

Strategic opportunities

While current service-learning projects have been effective at addressing community needs, opportunities exist for greater integration of service with priorities for community and economic development. The City of Fulton's strategic plan for 2000 provides insights into how future service projects might address the key issues named by informants. School officials also report the start of the school district's next strategic planning process opening up possibilities for new partnerships between school programs and local government, including service-learning.

Lessons learned

Service-learning can be effective when incorporated into an alternative school setting. Students showed evidence of multi-faceted benefits from their experience, including leadership, teamwork, social interaction, and career readiness skills. Service-learning also introduced students to why community programs like Red Cross and Meals on Wheels exist, how they are organized, and how they operate. A key ingredient in skill development is enabling students to assume responsibility for the process and the outcomes of service, and to learn accountability to each other and the organizations they serve. Other impacts of this model included changing negative student perceptions about school, and negative community perceptions about alternative school students.

Seneca, Missouri *Pop. 2,135*

Community background
Known historically as the "Little Town on the Border," Seneca is a rural community tucked into a small pocket of southwestern Missouri. Just across the state line are Oklahoma and the Eastern Shawnee tribal headquarters. Lost Creek and Little Lost Creek wander through downtown Seneca, which fills to capacity during Fourth of July, Homecoming, and Christmas parades.

Economic conditions

Community leaders describe Seneca's economy as relatively stable. It is home to three major manufacturers—MilNot, Eagle-Picher, and American Tripoli—which have provided solid employment for area workers. However, in recent years, commuter traffic to nearby Joplin has increased, causing some to see the town's role shifting to more of a bedroom community. The population of Seneca topped the 2,100 mark in the 2000 Census, and informants especially note an increase in the number of retirees moving to town. Because Seneca sits in a valley, space inside the city has limited industrial expansion. However, city officials are hopeful that annexation will prepare the way for business development in the future.

Civic environment

Seneca relies on community gatherings and festivals to attract visitors and to generate social and economic activity. Besides parades, the annual calendar includes cultural events such as the Indian Country Jamboree and the Eastern Shawnee Pow Wow. Informants indicate close, cooperative relations between the school, city, and business community. The part-time mayor is also the public works director. Popular hangouts serve to reconnect local residents and introduce the community to outsiders. As one informant refers to Barney's Kitchen, "that's our marketing department."

School system

The Seneca School District serves a strip of over 100 square miles of Newton County along the Missouri-Oklahoma border. K-12 school enrollment is 1,650 students, up by 4 percent over the past five years. The school system is a site of Caring Communities, a multi-agency initiative to improve youth outcomes in Missouri, and recently received a grant for a 21st Century Learning Center. According to informants, smaller class sizes and good school reputation attracts families to live in Seneca, even though they may work elsewhere.

Service-learning program

The service-learning program is a curricular option for students of the Seneca Alternative School. An AmeriCorps Promise Fellow is the primary program coordinator, and serves in conjunction with an on-site principal and teacher. In addition, an AmeriCorps member serves by facilitating student participation in service activities.

Service-learning projects

Alternative school students and AmeriCorps Members assisted with a Caring Communities survey, and students later surveyed a smaller segment of the community about service projects. Students learned behavior management, conflict resolution, and parenting skills while serving as classroom companions and mentors of young children in Head Start. Students worked with the

city and area businesses to expand Christmas lighting and decorations. Students have also initiated individual projects, including a canned food drive competition among elementary students and a computer literacy class for seniors.

Strengths and barriers

The strengths the school and community identified as favorable for service-learning include community pride and a close-knit social structure; strong leadership, networking, and common goals among groups; shared student ownership in the process, and small school size. Barriers to implementation include tight teacher time and classroom structures, the need for greater school support for service-learning, negative student attitudes, and finding meaningful projects.

Priority community issues

The top-ranked concerns on the minds of school and community leaders were primarily health and wellness issues, including substance abuse, and teen pregnancy and suicide. Other top issues included school bond issue passage, school capacity, and rising enrollment; an expanded employment base and more jobs; youth activities and recreation; poverty and better-paying jobs.

Strategic opportunities

Results from the Caring Communities survey and needs assessment illuminate various priority areas that service-learning projects could address. For instance, student might tackle teen pregnancy by building on student/teacher banquets with other forms of education and outreach. Roles for students may also be found in the development of a community health and fitness center, or in assessing opportunities for student-based businesses to fill unmet community needs.

Lessons learned

The flexible nature of the rural alternative school curriculum presents opportunities and challenges for service-learning. With greater emphasis on personal and social development, the interaction with the community that service provides is more easily legitimated. Also, alternative schools typically having greater teacher-student ratios, students are more easily mobilized to action. However, basic issues of transportation and student supervision in a small rural community remain. Outside-the-classroom learning may at first bring skepticism on the part of community members and even envy on the part of mainstream students.

Through service-learning, students can supply the human resource power needed to conduct a comprehensive community survey. Survey work supplies opportunities for students to interact with residents and to learn about community issues and priorities. In this way, it may also lead to further survey work or projects that inform and strategize future service.

Neodesha, Kansas *Pop. 2,848*

Community background

Nestled between the Fall and Verdigris Rivers in the southeast corner of Kansas, Neodesha gets its name from an Osage word meaning "where waters meet." The community's claim to fame is the first oil well drilled west of the Mississippi River. The Norman No. 1 Oil Well Museum and Park still commemorate the birthplace of the Mid-Continent Oil Field.

Economic conditions

With its traditional livelihood in oil and agriculture, Neodesha's economy suffered greatly during the Farm Crisis of the mid-1980s. High interest rates and unemployment led to lower school enrollment and downtown deterioration. However, new industries have helped the area's economy to rebound. Major employers like Cobalt Boats, Sands Level and Tool, and Prestige Cabinets occupy the Twin Rivers Industrial Park, providing stable jobs for area residents. Since 1971, roughly 1,500 manufacturing jobs have been added to the economy, pushing the county ratio of manufacturing jobs per capita near the top in the state. By embracing new ideas and technologies, Neodesha appears to be managing a successful transition to a global marketplace.

Civic environment

School and business leaders cite a strong civic spirit among residents as the "shining star" of their community. Neodesha became a Main Street town in 1993, and since then has renovated a historic hotel, installed downtown lighting, and constructed or improved a number of public facilities. The community leadership development program is the only county-wide program in the state. January 1, 2001 marked the completion of a yearlong Millennium celebration, featuring a calendar of community-wide events coordinated by the arts association, the schools, and other local groups. Youth involvement in Neodesha is extensive with student clubs and junior civic associations active in the community. Two high school students are appointed to the boards of the Chamber of Commerce and the Main Street organization.

School system

The Neodesha school system consists of an elementary school, middle school, and high school for grades 7-12. Enrollment last year was 845 students. Since coming to the district in 1995, the school superintendent has strengthened computer connectivity, community service, and teacher retention. The citizens of Neodesha recently approved a $4 million bond issue to expand the three schools in the district.

Service-learning program

The superintendent initiated a high school community service program using a student leadership retreat approach. The retreat focused on needs identification, which led to committee formation and eventually to service projects. The school program offers incentives to students for participating in volunteer activities, with students who complete 100 hours of service over their high school career receiving an award at graduation. The Learn and Serve coordinator position has recently been refilled, and an AmeriCorps Promise Fellow at the Chamber office's fledgling volunteer center sets up service opportunities for students and community volunteers.

Service-learning projects

In 1997, a high school entrepreneurship class researched theatre operations, developed a business plan, and put a downtown movie house back in business. Students in vocational technology and building trades also participated in the theatre renovation. Neodesha.com is the product of a high school web design class applying their skills for the benefit of the whole community. Students also designed web pages for area businesses and established service agreements for annual updates. A group of students installed landscaping around city hall, saving the city hundreds of dollars in labor expenses. With the help of a private grant, a vacant downtown business was converted into The Storm Shelter, an after-school and evening cyber cafe for young people. The school has also taken on city-wide clean-ups in preparation for community celebrations.

Strengths and barriers

School and community strengths that informants see contributing to the success of service-learning include the support and cooperation of citizens and businesses; positive community attitude; strong school and city government; small size of town and ease of transportation. Roadblocks to service-learning included lack of teacher time; finding projects and meeting community needs; student apathy; and a lack of funding for projects.

Priority community issues

Informants rank the top public issues for the community to address, including low-paying jobs and youth retention; owner-occupied and rental housing; recreational facilities and activities; and family turnover.

Strategic opportunities

A community planning task force completed a plan in 2000, with meetings conducted throughout town. Openings for service-learning to address community priorities might involve students in recreation center development, park playground improvements, or a school drug awareness program. Expansion of web services to the community, or other school-based enterprises targeting gaps in local services were also indicated as possibilities.

Lessons learned

Neodesha is an example of a rural service-learning program supplementing an already active array of youth civic involvement. The high school community service program generates enthusiasm for service without mandating service. The coordination of service-learning with existing efforts for community and economic development has been accomplished through a combination of individuals and organizations working together. Namely, the Chamber/Main Street director, the mayor, school superintendent, volunteer center coordinator, and student volunteer board have formed a ring of leadership to support these efforts. Community leadership and vision on the part of youth and adult leaders is a key factor. The school superintendent mentions his wife quipping, "You won't be happy until these kids are running the town." In all honesty, he says, he has to agree.

Glasco, Kansas *Pop. 536*

Community background

Glasco is a remote rural town of just over 500 people in north central Kansas, the nearest population center being Salina forty miles to the south. The community's origins trace back to the 1860s, when Scottish settlers renamed the stopping point Glasgow after the European city. The first postmaster misspelled the town's name on the registration papers, however, and so Glasco has taken on its own abbreviation. Today, in the southern end of Cloud County, Glasco is known as the stained glass capital of Kansas, and is home of the state's first rural fire department.

Economic conditions

Glasco is a poignant illustration of an isolated agricultural community in economic transition. A natural gas pipeline compressor plant closed in 1985 taking 50 jobs away from the community. In 2000, the grain elevator also shut down. With many of downtown Glasco's storefronts vacant, residents are left pondering what the future holds. With more than half of local residents over the age of 65, many have resigned themselves to memories of a community past. However, recent civic efforts have reopened a grocery store and installed a pocket park on Main Street, offering a glimmer of hope for revitalization.

Civic environment

For a town of its size and condition, the list of Glasco's recent civic achievements is impressive. The town's mayor was a recipient of the 2000 American Hometown Leadership Award. Glasco Chamber PRIDE is a small organization of townspeople dedicated to putting the community back on its feet. In 2000, the community was certified as a City of Excellence by the State of Kansas. The community also received Star Awards from state competitions for community and economic development in 1999 and 2000. Since 1998, several civic organizations have formed including an arts association, a historical society, and a community foundation. The community has also received an award from the Kansas Preservation Alliance for its efforts.

School system

The Southern Cloud School District is made up of an elementary school and high school sharing the same campus. The school system served 240 students from Glasco and the nearby town of Miltonvale in 2000. With student numbers dropping in recent years, administrators and community members have had to face the possibility of school closure. Classroom computer technology provides Internet access to community residents. School leaders cite the long tenure and low turnover of teachers as a definite strength of the district.

Service-learning program

The Glasco school was nationally recognized as a National Service-Learning Leader School in 1999, and again in 2001. The service-learning coordinator splits time between the program and managing Title I and at-risk youth grant activities. She also works closely with the school's youth action council and serves as an officer of Glasco Chamber PRIDE. A local partnership council of 13 members, including students, parents, school staff, and the mayor regularly advise the program. The program has also utilized artists-in-residence grants and University student service teams as resources to work with students on service-learning projects.

Service-learning projects

Major service-learning projects addressing community development have included a school-wide Millennium celebration held during the spring of 2000 and an ongoing summer arts and recreation program for young children in the city park. Through projects such as these, students have strengthened community pride and awareness and provided services otherwise not available to community residents.

Strengths and barriers

The strengths identified as influencing the success of service-learning include an openness to youth involvement; small town environment affording youth and community awareness; strong partnership and collaboration among groups; and student leadership and experience. Barriers to implementation included a lack of teacher time and buy-in to service learning; defining needs and finding projects; program continuity and facilitation with the community.

Community priority issues

The top several issues named as priorities for the future of Glasco included declining population and enrollment; saving the school and community identity; the poor agricultural economy, resulting in the need to attract business and more jobs; availability of quality housing; youth activities and entertainment; downtown building deterioration; and youth substance abuse.

Strategic openings

The service-learning program has done an effective job of incorporating Glasco Chamber PRIDE goals directly into projects. Strategic openings exist for connecting even a greater portion of student learning to community development projects and priorities. For example, students might address economic concerns through school-based enterprises or projects supporting regional tourism. Likewise, service-learning projects might utilize existing technologies to offer computer skill training and better link residents with the outside world.

Lessons learned

Glasco illustrates the dynamic effects that a sustained service-learning program can have on youth and adults over time. It demonstrates how closely service-learning projects can be linked with the goals and objectives set by community improvement groups. In this case, specific goals for community development doubled as service-learning projects. Further, Glasco offers ideas on how innovative use of the arts through service-learning can develop a sense of place in students while rebuilding and beautifying rural communities.

Through projects like the summer arts and recreation program, service-learning can raise the level of trust and respect that community adults have of young people. In this case, adults noticed changes in students, such as a greater sense of ownership and commitment to community activities. Alternatively, students said they learned teamwork, cooperation, and problem-solving skills, and developed a greater sense of obligation toward the community's well-being.

DeSoto, Kansas *Pop. 4,561*

Community background

DeSoto is a small but expanding community that lies along the rapidly growing K-10 corridor just west of Kansas City, Kansas. The community derives its name from the Spanish explorer Hernando DeSoto. It is the site of the Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant, active during the World War II era. The plant is now the subject of a controversial proposal to build the Wonderful World of Oz Theme Park and Resort near DeSoto.

Economic conditions

In earlier economic times, DeSoto served the Kansas City region as a rich supplier of agricultural commodities. More recently, economic shifts have brought in industries like Sealright, Custom Foods, and Engineering Air. With manufacturers moving to DeSoto, informants claim county per capita income as among the highest in the state. A major issue affecting the local economy is the community's decade-long population boom. Between 1990 and 2000, DeSoto's population rose from 2,291 to 4,561, an increase of 99 percent. Latino population also rose significantly during that same time period, up from five to 308 residents. Although the growth in numbers is partly due to the annexation of nearby residential areas, the population swing is dramatic even by regional standards.

Civic environment

Civil society in DeSoto is comprised of multiple community groups; many still kept active by older citizens. Several women's group maintain a presence in the community. An enhancement group has taken on downtown flags, park improvements, and home renovation projects. Agency representatives cite increased coordination of community services as also among civic improvements in recent years. Informants also point to growing relations between schools, the Chamber, and local government as a positive trend.

School system

The DeSoto Unified School District No. 232 was consolidated in 1962. The district is now composed of four elementary schools, two middle schools, and high schools in DeSoto and Mill Valley. Due to growth in the area, the school system is the fastest growing in Kansas, now with 3,250 students (360 at DeSoto High School). The district has also seen an escalation in Latino student enrollment from 4 to 18 in the last year.

Service-learning program

DeSoto High School has been a Learn and Serve program site since 1993, and was recognized as a National Service-Learning Leader School in 1999. According to the program coordinator, who is also the school social worker and oversees a drug and alcohol awareness grant, the concept started as a community service program. Later, a community service class was developed to add a learning component to the service. Now known as the Wildcat Work Force (WWF), the class involves 40 students in designing and implementing projects of their own choosing.

Service-learning projects

Students in a high school drafting class designed and constructed wooden toys for the local Toys for Tots program. Students from other classes contributed by soliciting donations for the project,

and by painting and delivering the toys to children in need. As part of their WWF class, two students organized a student body walk-a-thon for the American Diabetes Association. Students in a world affairs class served food in an urban soup kitchen and collected personal care items for packages to be delivered to the homeless.

Strengths and barriers

Strengths seen as favorable to the service-learning program consisted of people knowing each other; small town environment; major contributions of school to community; student led projects; and community acceptance of student volunteers. The impediments to service-learning identified by informants included school liability issues; finding projects; and lack of teacher and staff time.

Priority community issues

The top ranked issues informants identify before DeSoto include more local employment opportunities; rapid population growth and school expansion; public infrastructure improvements; housing availability and affordability; and senior citizen living alternatives.

Strategic opportunities

With priority issues identified by informants and the city recently updating its comprehensive plan, opportunities abound for linking service-learning with community development. For instance, student projects could research and present the pros and cons experienced by other rapid growth communities and schools on the urban fringe. Projects could apply Spanish translation skills to ensure new Latino residents have access to basic community services. Students might also partner with local government to survey residents and help forecast future housing and infrastructure needs.

Lessons learned

DeSoto provides an illustration of a particular set of demographic and economic issues facing rural communities who find themselves growing. Growth issues associated with the rural-urban fringe are challenging residents and decision-makers with questions of changing values, preferences, and future public service provision. Leaders face maintaining cohesion and a sense of community amid continuing forces of change. Service-learning can help students capitalize on these learning contexts through experiences that expose them to community planning, conflict and negotiation, and local political processes. Such knowledge and skills are essential if students are to engage in future contexts as public servants, volunteers, or concerned citizens.

The DeSoto program also highlights the maturation of a school-based community service program into service-learning. One advantage of a seasoned program is the community demand for student service that is generated by past involvement. However, one challenge to teachers and coordinators with moving into service-learning is ensuring real curricular integration and meaningful service occur, both for the community and for student learning and development.

Ainsworth, Nebraska *Pop. 1,862*

Community background

Ainsworth is a remote farming and ranching community located in the rural north central region of what is known as the "Nebraska Outback." North on Highway 7 from Broken Bow, past 40 miles of rugged plains and only a handful of homesteads, lies Ainsworth. Residents describe their community as "sincere and hospitable," and big on drawing in crowds. Ainsworth is proud to be the Country Music Capital of Nebraska, hosting a regional festival now for 31 years. It has also twice been the site of the National Horseshoe Pitching Competition. According to locals, a horseshoe champion described Ainsworth as "The Middle of Nowhere." The phrase caught on and is now the town's motto for promoting itself to the outside world.

Economic conditions

Like many other Midwest communities, Ainsworth's economy has slipped under poor agricultural commodity prices. In recent years, a few small industries have sprung up, including Seven Springs Water Bottling and a potato packaging plant. With the 2000 Census count in, the mayor of Ainsworth proudly reports that the community has only lost eight people over the last decade. Considering this region of Nebraska lost 13 percent of its population during the 1980s Farm Crisis, that is no small accomplishment. Outdoor recreation, local trail rides, cattlemen's balls, and the Cowboy Trail indicate that much of Ainsworth's economic future will lie in tourism and cultural development.

Civic environment

Ainsworth has made a consistent showing in civic endeavors in recent years. It is one of the most successful participants in the Nebraska Community Improvement Program, winning awards for community development in its population category the last seven years. Youth involvement is recognized as a facet of strong civic life. The mayor appoints two students to the Ainsworth Betterment Committee, which oversees a 1 percent economic development tax, and the Community Revitalization Committee, which maintains active involvement from the city, the school, and the Chamber of Commerce.

School system

The Ainsworth Community School District operates three elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. The three schools sited in Ainsworth share the same campus, enabling sharing of teacher resources and integration across schools. Long teacher tenure and low turnover have contributed to the quality of education students receive. Administrators indicate enrollment has remained stable in the last few years. Overall, informants report strong support from Ainsworth citizens, banks, and businesses, and good working relationships between the school and city government.

Service-learning program

Service-learning grew out of the "hands-on" approach to teaching and learning preferred by educators, and through a mandate that all teachers work on at least one integrated project per year. The program is co-coordinated by two 6th grade teachers who have worked with other teachers to reconfigure various classes for service-learning. The goals of the program are to build citizenship through student-owned service, and more broadly to get the school involved in

community improvement efforts. Youth retention is also acknowledged as an outcome, in fact, the middle school principal hypothesizes that service-learning may shorten the time span between when high school graduates leave the community and return later on.

Service-learning projects

The Long Pine Nature Trail Project has been the main thrust of the service-learning program. Every 8th grade science class for the past four years has been involved in making improvements to the Long Pine Nature Area northeast of town. The first class formed committees and did the initial legwork. Subsequent classes have worked on trails, bridges, stairways, picnic areas, information centers, and project presentations through art, math, earth science, social science, industrial technology, and computer technology classes. Teachers make connections between the project and community revitalization, and discuss how it has helped get youth caring not just about the community but the broader region and environment.

Strengths and barriers

Strengths named underlying the success of service-learning include community support and openness to new ideas; interaction and cooperation between school and community; and support within the school. Barriers to implementation that arose are lack of teacher time; project scheduling; increased number of students involved; classroom and curricular integration; and coordination with area businesses.

Priority community issues

The top issues facing leaders and citizens in Ainsworth are better-paying jobs and youth retention; poor agricultural economy; business expansion and attraction; availability, affordability, and quality of housing; and tourism marketing and natural resource enhancements.

Strategic opportunities

The Community Revitalization Committee conducted a committee survey in 1998, and last year held a town hall meeting to revisit community project priorities. From the meeting, tourism development through greater use of area state parks was established as a priority. Informants speculate about how other service-learning projects could address where the community is going. In addition to tourism in the Sandhills/Niobrara River region, service-learning might address a youth center, value-added enterprises, or alternative housing construction.

Lessons learned

The Long Pine Nature Trail Project demonstrates the impact that a focused and sustained service-learning effort can have on a rural community. The project served as the focal point around which an enduring community partnership has been built. The partnership resulting from the project has increased Ainsworth's capacity to take on future rural development projects. At the school level, student projects have furthered learning and generated interest in what else might be possible. The cross-course integration of student activities has also shown that service-learning can be applied to multi-faceted community projects.

Albion, Nebraska *Pop. 1,797*

Community background

Albion is a small agricultural community on the eastern edge of the Nebraska Sandhills. In fact, the town's motto is "Gateway to the Sandhills." As legend has it, the winner of a card game earned the right to name the town, and did so after Albion, New York. Albion was platted in 1872, and became the termination point of three railroad lines. Today it lies 120 miles northwest of Lincoln and 140 miles west of Omaha, greeting Interstate travelers who venture west on Highway 91 or north on Highway 39 into the state's rural interior.

Economic conditions

The structure of Albion's economy shows signs of transition to global agricultural markets. The area is home to cattle feeding, agribusiness, and hog confinement operations accounting for a significant share of local jobs. A newly formed economic development committee of bankers, city officials, and civic leaders is beginning to formalize relationships and shape discussions about the future. The committee's first project would involve a partnership with the school to purchase, renovate, and reopen Keith Theater downtown. A high school entrepreneurship class would take on the project, teaching students skills for starting businesses in small towns.

Civic environment

A full range of active adult and youth civic organizations can be found within Albion. The Chamber of Commerce has become more directly involved with the school system in recent years. Each elementary grade level has a business partner, and students meet and interact with business leaders through various activities. According to informants, place-based education projects have helped Albion citizens become more aware and more proud of the attributes that make their community unique.

School system

The school system is comprised of an elementary school of 310 students and a junior and senior high school of 330 students. Students learn in the classrooms of many seasoned teachers who have over 20 years of tenure. The school works in close partnership with community entities such as city government, the hospital, nursing home, public library, historical society, and Prairie Plains Resource Institute. The philosophy of administrators is to make the school as much a part of the community, and the community as much a part of the school as possible.

Service-learning program

The place-based education/service-learning program began in Albion in 1993. Funding from Nebraska's Schools-at-the-Center organization (Rural School and Community Trust) began supporting projects four years ago. The coordinator, who is also the 6th grade teacher, works with teachers to generate ideas, pass ownership on to students, and find needed resources. Commitment to the place-based model has involved school participation in community development planning, involving students in all stages of decision-making, encouraging teacher curriculum development, and maintaining ongoing professional development.

Service-learning projects

An FCCLA student developed a children's book as part of a program to teach parents the importance of early reading instruction. The "City Blocks" book uses photos of community signs and other familiar markings to help readers learn their ABCs. Based on visits to a local historian, business owners, and the public library, fifth grade students documented the history of Albion's downtown buildings, and put together a publication that has stirred interest in historic preservation. Art students designed a "Welcome to Albion" mural for a brick archway entrance to Fuller Park. The students worked with Endicott Clay Products of Fairbury, Nebraska to create the mural, and the city administrator facilitated discussions between the school, the city, and the family who donated the land for the park. Seniors in the Modern Problems class attend monthly board and council meetings to learn about and participate in civic and governmental processes.

Independent Computer students developed and maintained web pages for Albion city government and other community groups. The students then hosted a daylong technology institute at the school to teach their adult community partners web site development and maintenance skills. At the Olson Nature Preserve, students have engaged in Summer Enrichment Program activities to enhance the outdoor classroom site, while learning about local ecology and the protection of plant and wildlife species.

Strengths and barriers

School and community strengths in favor of service-learning include hometown pride and community survival; talented, receptive, and motivated students; school administrator support and receptiveness; school and community trust; and citizen economic awareness. Barriers to service-learning include a shortage of program coordination time; lack of community awareness and defined needs; lack of funding; changes in student interest; and changes in school personnel.

Priority community issues

The community issues ranked most highly by informants include business attraction and jobs for youth; declining population and school enrollment; housing for young families; retiree needs and senior citizen assisted living; and computer technology past the digital divide.

Strategic opportunities

With its existing program, Albion is making significant inroads into linking student learning with community development. Strategic areas for student involvement down the road may include other business development and retention projects, expanding computer skills and services offered to local organizations, and perhaps a cooperative housing effort between the economic development committee, city government, and the school.

Lessons learned

The Albion program is a clear example of how a rural school can operate as a resource for community and economic development. Once ideas are generated in the community, the school acts as a convener for community projects. Through place-based education and service-learning, the program exemplifies how schools can take their own strides toward reinventing a local curriculum and removing the line of demarcation between school and community.

Altoona, Iowa (Southeast Polk) Pop. 10,345

Community background

Altoona is a mid-size community in the northeast shadow of Des Moines. Located close to Interstates 80 and 65, the town is well positioned as the transportation hub of central Iowa. Between 1990 and 2000, Altoona's population far surpassed growth estimates, moving from 7,242 to 10,345 people, an increase of 48 percent. The community is known for regional attractions such as the Prairie Meadow Race Track and Casino, Adventureland Amusement Park, and Altoona Rose Gardens.

Economic conditions

Especially in the last few years, Altoona has boomed in commercial and residential development. In fact, almost half (43 percent) of the land in town is now used for residential purposes. Celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2000, the Chamber of Commerce added 40 new members last year and 30 the year before. The Chamber continues to take an aggressive stance toward business attraction. A leading issue for local government is keeping public services up with the pace of growth. The city recently broke ground for a new fire station. With Des Moines area regional planners considering surrounding rural areas a "hindrance to growth," the future of Altoona appears to be decidedly suburban.

Civic environment

According to a city publication, the Altoona civic sector is made up of over fifty service organizations. For community improvement projects, informants acknowledge the Lions and Jaycees Clubs in particular as playing leadership roles. The Community Service Campus and the Sam Wise Youth Sports Complex provide year-round recreational and educational activities for youth and families. The Old Town Altoona district preserves the historical character of the buildings, while providing visitors with a taste of the original downtown district.

School system

In 1961, the school consolidation movement fused public education in the communities of Altoona, Mitchellville, Pleasantville, and Runnels. Today, the Southeast Polk School District (SEP) is made up of seven elementary schools spread throughout the district, a centrally located junior and senior high school, and an alternative high school. Altogether, the school system enrolls 4,730 students. Southeast Polk Schools sits on an 80-acre campus five miles south of Altoona. Because of its size, transportation is a major function of the system, with over 40 buses traveling 2,500 miles per day.

Service-learning program

The service-learning program incorporates a number of school-based projects and activities that have been in existence in the SEP school for years. The Director of Curriculum and Instruction oversees the program, working with teachers and student organization advisors on project coordination and implementation.

Service-learning projects

Project Renew involved natural resource, horticulture, and junior high science classes in partnership with the Metro Waste Authority to convert fifteen acres behind the school into a

nature area. With the help of outside expertise, students drained and redeveloped a pond, planted trees and sod, and created habitat for native species of Iowa's grasslands, woodlands, and wetlands. The Altoona Community Band brought an instrumentation teacher and students together with community adults of all ages to practice and perform summer concerts in the park. The OASIS/Little Buddies project involves at-risk junior high students in forming friendships and mentoring students in lower grade levels. Through various agriculture classes, students installed landscaping around Altoona's American Legion Hall, saving the organization $3,600 in labor expenses. FFA and agriculture students also operate a school-based greenhouse, conducting bedding plant sales and creating hanging baskets for the beautification of downtown Altoona. Senior Community Improvement Day involves teams of seniors with community members in landscaping, painting, and park restoration projects.

Strengths and barriers

Area and district strengths in support of service-learning include grants and school administration support; openness to working with at-risk students; teacher and student motivation and support; partner organizations and flexibility; community support and generous volunteer time. Barriers to service-learning include community awareness and involvement; transportation; project scheduling and time conflicts; reluctance to work with at-risk students; and school administration support and assistance.

Priority community issues

Top priorities for informants regarding the future of Altoona include rapid population growth; changing priorities and declining commitment to family; substance abuse; and parenting skills and school involvement.

Strategic opportunities

The City of Altoona is in the process of revising its comprehensive plan. The results may offer insights for linking service-learning with the most updated priorities for community development. Projects might involve students in researching smart growth options from communities that have seen similar demographic changes. Service-learning might also be used to promote healthy youth behaviors through partnerships with local recreational agencies, or to spin-off greenhouse and landscaping services into school-based businesses.

Lessons learned

The Altoona example explains the challenges and opportunities facing rural service-learning programs housed within large consolidated schools. Located several miles outside of the nearest community, transportation is an obvious issue for the program. In addition, student affiliations to particular communities may complicate decisions about what students do and where. One student mentioned that within the circumstances, "we all consider ourselves Southeast Polk-ers." The school has somewhat compensated for its location outside a community by adopting projects that are school-based or that focus on maintaining and improving school property or resources.

Corning, Iowa *Pop. 1,783*

Community background

Corning is a small agricultural community founded in the rich-soiled cornfields of southwest Iowa. Corning history dates back to the arrival of the Icarians, a group of French Democratic Socialists traveling west in the 1850s in search of their Utopia. Lasting until 1898, the Icarian Village became the longest existing, non-religious communal experiment in American history. Later, the town was named for the railroad financier Erastus C. Corning. Corning became a Rural Main Street Iowa community in 1990, and received the Spirit of Main Street Award in 1996. Then, in 1998 it was selected as one of five Great American Main Street Communities. With "Corning—A Class Act" as its motto, the community is reputed for its old-fashioned charm and hospitality, as well as being the birthplace of Johnny Carson. Residents today describe Corning as a spirited town that still "lives larger than its population."

Economic conditions

With agriculture as the longstanding economic base of the area, falling farm prices have adversely affected many families. Some of the effects have been offset by collaborative efforts to stabilize businesses and attract new industries. The Adams Community Economic Development Corporation has been successful in working with regional and state partners to generate new employment and income. The Blue Grass Industrial Park has gradually filled up with facilities, including the Brown Bear Corporation, Precision Pulley, and Midwest Products. The Main Street organization has actively worked to promote and improve downtown business retention and historic preservation. In addition, the Adams County Venture Capital Company is getting started as a mechanism for channeling investment into the community.

Civic environment

Informants explain the community's lively civic spirit in terms of a progressive, egalitarian mindset of "one for all, all for one" that has endured for generations. Volunteerism is highly valued by the community, and informants note the cohesiveness between local leaders and organizations. At the invitation of the high school principal, young "communiteers" take on weekend service projects around the community. Two student representatives serve as voting members of the Main Street Board of Directors. For recreation, a popular past time is the Adams County Speedway, where weekly NACAR races draw in crowds from around the region.

School system

The Corning Community School District is comprised of an elementary school, middle school, and high school, enrolling a total of 640 students. The school system places much emphasis on educating students into local careers and roles of service. Beginning at the elementary level, the School-to-Work program consists of multiple grade-specific activities including field trips, simulations, career exploration classes, action plans, and course-based experiences. High school students participate in a Cooperative Extension program preparing them to be community ambassadors. Building trades students have worked with the city housing department on the construction of spec homes.

Service-learning program

The service-learning program in Corning works hand-in-hand with the School-to-Work program. The program coordinator contributes roughly one quarter time to service-learning. Much of the role entails developing partnerships with local agencies and organizations, representing the school's programs to the public, even participating in the annual planning retreats of the economic development corporation. Employer awareness and youth retention are two goals of the service-learning program, and this is reflected in the service projects that students experience.

Service-learning projects

The primary service-learning project has focused on the Main Street organization's ten year renovation of Central Park. Through various sources, the community has installed or enhanced a veteran's memorial and flag, central fountain, historic lighting, and pavilion. Students have contributed to the effort by building and installing park benches. Fifth graders sanded and painted the wooden slats for the benches. Eighth grade vocational agriculture students prepared and leveled soil and installed pre-grass. High school students assembled and installed the finished benches in the park. The Central Park project has received an award for Best Public Improvement from the Iowa Department of Economic Development.

Strengths and barriers

Strengths supporting service-learning include youth and adult leadership interaction; available youth job opportunities; strong school and community partnership; and community initiative. Barriers to implementation include difficulties with classroom and time structures; teacher time and availability; transportation; and limited personnel for school program coordination.

Priority community issues

Informants rank the top issues facing the future of Corning as population decline, youth retention, and the need for community marketing; low pay and limited availability of jobs; technology infrastructure; improved youth-adult relationships; substance abuse; and new and rehabilitated housing.

Strategic opportunities

From its annual planning retreats, the Adams Community Economic Development Corporation has done an excellent job of documenting accomplishments and future goals for rural development. Openings for strategic service-learning may include students in renovating second story housing, conducting formal business visitations, teaming up for opera house and railroad depot projects, or helping to develop a downtown walking tour.

Lessons learned

The Corning illustration shows how a rural service-learning program can dovetail nicely with an existing School-to-Work program. The career development and civic responsibility outcomes of the programs are closely intertwined. Student projects contributed directly to ongoing community work toward development and revitalization. A strong civic environment, healthy organizational structures, and a track record of accomplishments are all advantageous for community development-oriented service-learning.

Lacona, Iowa (Southeast Warren) Pop. 360

Community background

Lacona is a small agricultural community dotting the south central landscape of Iowa about 35 miles south of Des Moines. In early days, Lacona was well-known for its mineral springs, brass bands, and circus-style entertainers. Today, traces of early community life are still found in an original log cabin restored by community volunteers. For a town of its small size, Lacona's main street maintains a diverse array of locally owned shops and businesses.

Economic conditions

With modern changes to the agriculture industry, more Lacona residents have joined the ranks of commuters traveling to jobs in neighboring centers. A growing number of residents have also reached the age of retirement. The middle school and the South Central Coop remain the two largest sources of employment. The construction of the Southeast Warren School District's Intermediate Center for grades 4 to 6 is now nearing completion. The local development corporation has partnered with builders to buy up older properties and refurbish housing. The community markets itself to outsiders as a picturesque rural setting for raising families, while remaining within an hours drive to urban amenities.

Civic environment

Lacona maintains a listing of civic groups with memberships young and old. The American Legion carries a continuous hand in community improvement projects. Youth staff sports concession stands and clean-up parks and the community through the school's Extended Learner Program.

School system

Since consolidation in 1962, the Southeast Warren School District is made up of three facilities spread out in three rural communities. The elementary school is in Milo, the middle school in Lacona, and the high school on the edge of Liberty Center. With open enrollment taking effect, student enrollment has dipped just under 600. The high school principal has introduced a character education initiative, touching every aspect of the school environment. The program includes a student character council, school guest presentations, monthly theme activities, and projects.

Service-learning program

The service-learning program builds upon character education, especially by helping students understand the notion of "good citizenship." The program coordinator splits music teaching duties between the elementary school and high school, as well as facilitation of the character education program. School faculty who are new to the district, and who live outside of the communities it serves, are issues for the continuity of service-learning. Thus far, projects have centered on improving relationships between students within the school system, between students and elders, and between communities in the school district.

Service-learning projects

After nearly a decade of tension between Southeast Warren communities over an unresolved school bond issue, a children's summer theatre project was organized to promote unity and

celebrate common heritage. Students interviewed senior citizens, wrote stories and biographies, and created illustrations of town history. A fictitious play based on actual people and events was rehearsed and presented to the public in the park in Lacona on the Fourth of July.

Strengths and barriers

School and community strengths informants listed as important for service-learning include small communities and working together; youth enthusiasm; identified needs; feeling of belonging; and high student self-esteem. Barriers to service-learning include classroom structure and getting outside; transportation; lack of teacher support; lack of funding; and lack of parental support.

Priority community issues

The top ranked issues identified by informants for the Southeast Warren area include a consolidated school district with fragmented communities; youth job opportunities and activities; youth and adult substance abuse; adult approval of youth involvement; and the poor agricultural economy.

Strategic opportunities

Local development groups are involved in planning efforts that could possibly inform strategic uses of service-learning in area communities. For instance, informants indicate that the City of Milo has recently undertaken a review of its comprehensive plan with the help of graduate students from Iowa State University. From these efforts, opportunities might exist for involving vocational students in starting a housing construction program. Plans for establishing credit for high school computer technical assistance could be extended so students apply their skills to the needs of city government or area businesses. Service projects for old schoolhouse, historic hotel, or other planned renovations might amplify classroom learning for students while contributing to the revitalization of Southeast Warren communities.

Lessons learned

Lacona teaches that rural service-learning and character education can be combined under the same schoolhouse. Service-learning provides a means through which to accomplish character-building outcomes, while character education helps establish a rationale to serve. This case study also gives testimony to the use of service-learning to impact the broader social context of rural communities. According to informants, the children's summer theatre project was the first endeavor of its kind that the school had undertaken. While the production did not resolve longstanding disagreements between communities on school issues, informants indicate that it brought community residents back to a place of realizing they hold much in common. It introduced students to seniors, and seniors to students. As a result, some students have continued to assist their elders with needs, and a group of seniors started a program for student holiday gift-giving. Community perceptions of youth have changed for the better, as have youth perceptions of the community, and this has begun to open the doorway to more extended youth involvement.

Appendix J – School-Community Project Development Worksheet

Linking K-12 Service-Learning and Rural Community Development

School-Community Project Development Worksheet

A. **List the 5 most important public issues facing the future of your community as a whole** (availability of jobs, housing conditions, youth substance abuse, adult literacy, rapid population growth, etc.):

(Hint: what topics frequently appear in the local newspaper, what do people talk about in meetings and conversations, what do visitors say about the community, etc.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Now compare issues with your group members and choose one priority to focus on.

B. **Which organizations or agencies in the community work most directly with this issue** (i.e. city hall, Chamber of Commerce, Citizens for Community Pride, arts council, Habitat for Humanity, Jaycees, etc.)?

C. **What method(s) does the community use for setting goals or making decisions about the issue** (i.e. city planning, public hearings, school board meetings, county health needs assessments, etc.)?

D. **What are existing community programs or projects, if any, addressing the issue** (i.e. Chamber business retention program, mentor-a-child project, Travel Highway 36 campaign, English for Speakers of Other Languages, spring clean-up day, etc.)?

E. What ideas do students have about the issue and what they can do about it?

F. **How can students use community decision-making methods to learn about the issue and decide what they will do** (i.e. consult survey results, organize focus groups, participate in a visioning session, etc.)?

G. **Which parts of the school curriculum, individual classes or content areas, are most applicable?**

H. **Describe a service-learning project that will positively impact the community issue.**

Appendix K – Recommended Resources for Further Learning

Linking K-12 Service-Learning and
Rural Community Development:

Recommended Resources for Further Learning

14 Points: Successfully Involving Youth in Decision Making. http://www.youthonboard.org. 2000. Somerville, MA: Youth on Board.

At the Table: Youth Voice in Decision Making, Parts 1 and 2 (video). http://www.youthonboard.org. 2000. Somerville, MA: Youth on Board.

Active Citizenship Today Implementation Guide: Questions and Answers About Service Learning. http://www.crf-usa.org. 1998. Washington D.C.: Close Up Foundation and Los Angeles: Constitutional Rights Foundation. How can students, teachers, school administrators, parents, and concerned community members work together on local issues? How can teachers and school administrators find—and maintain—school and community support for a service-learning program? How can teachers fulfill their curriculum requirements while students explore and address the needs of their community? The Active Citizenship Today Implementation Guide distills nearly five years of experience accumulated by CRF and Close Up Foundation during the development of ACT—Active Citizenship Today. ACT is a service-learning program for middle- and high-school students that links social studies skills and knowledge to community needs and resources. ACT is built around a problem-solving framework that offers a hands-on approach to local political issues, government, and policy. The ACT Implementation Guide gathers information from program designers, teachers, school administrators, students, parents, and community members who have participated in the ACT program in school districts across the country. This easy-to-use handbook answers a broad range of practical questions about planning any service-learning program and keeping it going. For more information on CRF programs and publications, call (800) 488-4CRF or visit our web site.

Benefits^2: The Exponential Results of Linking School Improvement and Community Development. http://www.sedl.org/prep/benefits2/issue1/. Online. Austin, TX: Southwest Education Development Laboratory. This is the first of a series of papers about how rural communities and

schools can work together. The series demonstrates that by working together, rural schools and communities can enhance education while revitalizing the community. Solid partnerships between schools and communities renews a sense of collective identity, enhances quality of life, maximizes the use of limited resources, and opens up new opportunities for economic growth. See also related papers at the same site.

Building a Foundation for Community Leadership: Involving Youth in Community Development Projects. http://ext.msstate.edu/srdc/publications/series.htm. 1996. Israel, Glenn D., Thomas W. Ilvento and Tonya Stringfellow. Starkville, MS: Southern Rural Development Center. SRDC No. 199. This handbook is designed to guide Extension agents, high school teachers, and adult leaders of youth organizations in creating and implementing their own youth leadership and community development project. The purposes of this project are: 1) to provide youth with a community service learning process so as to increase their understanding of their community, to improve their sense of empowerment, and to encourage participation in community affairs; 2) to forge the school-community partnership and to develop increased community support for the school's educational programs; and 3) to help community leaders and citizens address important local needs through the enthusiasm, knowledge, and labor contributed by youth. One participant's remarks were, "I'm more likely to be involved because here I've been involved already and I want to see it keep moving."

Building Communities for Tomorrow. http://www.profiles.iastate.edu/bct/. Online. Ames, IA: Iowa State Extension. Contains short learning tutorials for Community Assessment and Data Analysis.

Community Development Society. http://comm-dev.org. Online. CDS is the professional society for the field of community development. Website includes information on annual conferences, state chapters, and links to other resources for learning and networking with community developers around the U.S. and abroad.

Community Development Toolbox. http://www.ag.uiuc.edu/~lced/toolbox/#. Online. University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign. Includes tools for community benchmarking, strategic planning, community surveys, telecommunications readiness index, etc.

Community Partnership Toolkit. http://www.wkkf.org/Documents/cct/secd/cptoolkit/. Online. Battle Creek, MI: W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

Community Resilience Manual. http://www.cedworks.com. 2000. Vernon, BC, Canada: Centre for Community Enterprise. Includes a guide to a four-step approach for strengthening community resilience (now including the facilitation of a community planning workshop) and a workbook that residents can use to develop a portrait of community resilience and set priorities for local action. A companion to the Manual is also available from the same location: "Tools & Techniques for Community Recovery & Renewal" (190 pages, total). Previously entitled the Catalogue to the Community Resilience Manual, this is a compendium of best practices in the field of community economic development from across Canada and the U.S. "Tools and Techniques" features over 60 entries - twice as many as appeared in the draft edition - divided into four categories: 1) planning, research, and advocacy; 2) building human resources; 3) retaining and creating jobs; and 4) financing community action. Each entry describes a specific instrument, structure, or approach, outlines its use, and supplies additional contact and resource information.

Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community Toolbox. http://www.ezec.gov/Toolbox/. Online. Washington D.C.: U. S. Department of Agriculture-Rural Development. Office of Community Development. Guidebooks for strategic planning, community benchmarking and implementation, economic opportunities for rural communities, and more.

Foxfire Fund. http://www.foxfire.org/. Online. An original source for place-based education with resources for schools wanting to create learner-centered, community-focused learning environments.

Glossary of Selected Citizen Participation Techniques.
http://www.policity.com/cp/Public%20Library/glossary.htm. Online. PoliCity.com. A quick reference to tools and techniques for involving citizens (young and old) in community decision-making. Includes links and references to other sites and sources.

Identifying Needs and Strengths. http://communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/getting_started/needs/. Online. communitybuilders.nsw. New South Wales Government. Australia. Includes survey designs, techniques, and tools for collecting information from organizations and communities.

Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development.
http://www.fourhcouncil.org/CYD/index.htm. Online. The Innovation Center's programs focus on youth development and community development, governance, philanthropy, technology, and civic activism. The website includes more information about program areas, publications, workbooks, and training and technical assistance services.

Involving Kids in a Community Planning Process. http://www.planning.org/educ/vision.htm. Online. Chicago: American Planning Association. Newsletter issue on kids and community planning also includes articles visioning with young adults and kids speaking for the future.

Kids Around Town (KAT) Model for Youth Civic Engagement.
http://www.libertynet.org/pa/kat/katmodel.html. A teacher- and student-friendly approach to developing school projects for youth civic engagement. The model includes: 1) choosing a local issue; 2) researching the issue; 3) analyzing the research; 4) developing an action plan; 5) taking civic action; 6) assessment and reflection.

Know Your Community: A Step-by-Step Guide to Community Needs and Resources Assessment. Samuels, Bryan et al. 1995. Chicago: Family Resource Coalition. Designed to assist community-based planning groups in completing a comprehensive community assessment. Takes an asset-oriented rather than deficiency-oriented approach, considering individuals, citizen's groups, organizations, and government resources as elements that contribute to community.

Local Government CECH-UP Program.
http://www.umsl.edu/divisions/education/cech_up/students/students.html. *The Local Government CECH-UP (Citizen Education Clearing House) Program is a curricular tool for helping students learn to analyze local issues (data collection, public meetings, issues forums, interviews, surveys, focus groups, etc.), establish an action agenda, and take action to improve their communities. Among other things, the goals of CECH-UP are familiarizing students with local government, providing opportunities for students to research and discuss problems and challenges facing local government in their communities, and strengthening relationships between schools, local governments, and Cooperative Extension.*

Measures for Community Research Database. http://www.aspenmeasures.org/. Online. Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives. This database includes outcome measures of importance to policy makers, philanthropists, and researchers. The collection features measures grouped under eight major topics: Community Building, Economic Development, Employment, Education, Housing and Neighborhood Conditions, Neighborhood Safety, Social Services, and Youth Development. The database features descriptions of data collection tools, such as surveys, interview and self-assessment guides. It is an excellent resource for identifying program outcomes and designing evaluation and assessment.

National Youth Development Information Center. http://www.nydic.org. Contains definitions of youth development and related terms, also outcome measures and program evaluation.

Nationally Juried 4-H Experiential Learning Youth Development Curriculum Collection.
http://www.reeusda.gov/4h/curricul/curricul.htm. Includes a background summary, source, and contact information on curricula related to youth development and experiential learning. Examples of

curricular programs featured include: Public Adventures Citizenship Curriculum, The Kids Guide to Social Action: How to Solve Social Problems., Youth in Governance, and Youth as Trustees.

Partners in Leadership: Youth and Adults Working Together for Better Communities. Hougen, Roy E., Katey Walker, Elizabeth Templin, and Janet Ayres. 1993. Ames, IA: Iowa State University. http://www.ag.iastate.edu/centers/rdev/educational.html or http://www.reeusda.gov/4h/curricul/ae2.htm. This is an educational program that provides opportunities for youth and adults to work together as partners in the process of community decision-making for rural revitalization. The program combines subject matter with experiential learning activities divided into 10 modules. It has become the first 4-H produced curriculum to be accepted into the National Juried 4-H Youth Development Curriculum Collection. The basis of the program is that youth have an interest in, as well as a need for, working with adults to improve the quality of life in their rural communities. They have special capabilities, perspectives, and energies to work with adults in dealing with issues and decisions that affect them now and in the future.

Place Value: An Educator's Guide to Good Literature on Rural Lifeways, Environments, and Purposes of Education. 1998. Haas, Toni and Paul Nachtigal. Eric Clearinghouse/Rural Education and Small Schools. http://www.ael.org/eric. Included are five bibliographical essays from the authors, who were co-directors of the Annenburg Rural Challenge, that review fiction and nonfiction writing that emphasizes how rural communities are forged by their particular ecology, politics, economy, values, and spirituality.

Rural School and Community Trust. Online. http://www.ruraledu.org/. Formerly the Annenburg Rural Challenge, the Trust is a national sponsor and advocacy organization linking rural schools and communities through place-based education. The website includes a directory of schools and organizations involved in place-based work, philosophical papers, policy position statements, and a host of other resources pertaining to rural education.

Service-Learning in the Northwest. http://www.nwrel.org/ruraled/learnserve/. Online. Portland: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. This site offers portfolios of rural service-learning programs in Washington, as well as a service-learning toolbox for designing projects and essential elements of successful programs.

Sustainable Small Schools: A Handbook for Rural Communities. 1997. Howley, Craig B. and John M. Eckman. Eric Clearinghouse/Rural Education and Small Schools. http://www.ael.org/eric. This handbook helps community members and educators work together to improve small, rural schools. It is written in a readable style developed for a lay audience, but also includes the concerns that teachers and administrators face when working with community members. Chapters cover the historical and political factors affecting rural, small schools, curriculum considerations, model strategies, guidance on collaboration, and use of technology. An extensive resource chapter provides information about partnerships; coalition building; needs assessment; consolidation research; options such as Foxfire, four-day week, technology, and more; and tools for finding information.

Tools for Change: Getting High School Students Involved in Community Service-Learning. http://www.quest.edu/slarticle6.htm. Online. Keister, Sue, Dick Kinsley, and Hank Resnik. Quest International. This provides information about a high school level curriculum to help students and teachers get started in service-learning. It is part of the Lions-Quest Skills for Action program developed by the Lions Club, Intl. and the National Youth Leadership Council. The publication is based on several themes: appropriate fit in curriculum, finding time and resources to implement, and teachers' need for solid support. The curriculum is highly flexible and adaptable, covering a wide range of skills students need, teacher- and student- generated projects, and ranging from small group experiences to long-term projects.

W. K. Kellogg Collection of Rural Community Development Resources. http://www.unl.edu/kellogg/. Online. Lincoln, NE: Heartland Center for Leadership Development. Contains quality materials on rural community development from programs funded by the Kellogg Foundation and other notable

sponsors. Includes guidebooks, manuals, workshop materials, reports, books, and videos, which are divided into seven categories, each dealing with a different topic: community development, strategic planning, telecommunications, leadership development, economic development, land use/natural resources, and health care.

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